

IT'S ONLY A MOVIE! #3

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SECRET HISTORIES CENSORED DREAMS

It is a funny thing how our recent past can be so obscured, so difficult to get a handle on. Most of our past is fed to us by people with their own agendas, so the 1950's has been obscured by HAPPY DAYS, SHA NA NA, GREASE, political agendas, oldies radio. We seem to edit our past, all the while claiming we have to remember it or else. Actually, lots of countries have remembered the past, and then turned around and created the same errors. Perhaps the past is only important in that we can contrast attitudes of then and now. Maybe that's all it is good for.

Watching 1950's American TV shows one would never know that there was a restless underground in the states. A sexual underground that discovered and kept alive Betty Page, who now is the darling of the DETAILS-VANITY FAIR-ROLLING STONE crowd and has been discovered by Europe again. Listening to commentators on the 50's about how boring it was would make you forget that this was the time of Lenny Bruce, The Beats, a restless urge that seemed to touch a significant but not necessarily large part of the population - an urge to expand the mind and experience beyond the norm. How was this possible?

I say it was a climate created by Eisenhower. Under Harry Truman, Senator McCarthy had been unleashed along with the House of Un-American Activities (HUAC) to the cheers of the Democratic Party, in order to discover commies under the bed, or so they said. Actually, there are several cases on record where those cooperating with this inquisition and giving names were being given lists of names and told not to mention others! I once saw McCarthy's right hand man, Roy Cohn, squirm when asked why that was done. A climate of fear and distrust was being whipped up. Paul Robeson, the singer-turned-actor-turned-communist-turned nationalist visited Truman in the White House to ask him if the Federal Government would investigate lynchings. That got him physically thrown out of the White House and condemned in the nation's press. How dare he! In the frenzy of paranoia Truman did something

that offended World War 2 hero like Eisenhower.

He signed an order for the removal of all Dashiell Hammett's books and that really seems to have bugged him. One of his first actions as President was to return Hammett to the book shelves. And let it be known to the Army that the President was not going to give McCarthy the full support that Truman had. The Army went after, and



Irving Klaw shows Betty Page the ropes.

brought down, the man who had turned the country in on itself. There is a strange moment in the film THE ATOMIC CAFE where nuclear bombs go off and the voice of Eisenhower giving his inaugural address is heard. I went over to the TV and turned the picture off and let the sound run. Despite what you have been led to believe the speech is a calming speech. For years during the involvement of the U.S. in Korea Truman had threatened using the Atomic Bomb on Korea. Eisenhower was one of the only military leaders to oppose its use in Japan, he certainly didn't want Truman's

loy used on Korea. For years, Truman's Joe McCarthy had searched for hidden Communists in our government, while unknown to most Americans Truman was actually involved in a heavy shell game - while America looked under her bed for Reds the government hid Nazis in South America and in our space program. Eisenhower's inaugural address was a reminder to a nation caught up in the frenzy of a Red nightmare that there was nothing to worry about. We were the strongest and richest nation on earth, why not enjoy it? For this, like was and to this day still is, called our most boring president.

The Democrats hated it when a crisis would arise and like would go golfing. Truman and Roosevelt before him would make dramatic pronouncements - people lost track of how many times Truman threatened nuclear war against Korea and other nations. It happened that often. Yet here was a president who, when faced with nations trying to visibly shake him up, could be found on the golf course. "Waiting them out" was also the course like wanted in Japan during World War 2, the island was surrounded and our intelligence told us they had a few months at best before the Japanese ran almost totally out of food. Despite what you have been told over the years, no nation on earth has fought to the last man when the man's family hasn't eaten in a month.

America began to relax. Strange things started happening. Things that for reasons, mostly political, you and I have been told nothing but nostalgia and lies about. How many times have you been told of the Red paranoia "that happened in the Eisenhower Years"? How many times have you read of "the boring 1950's" in article after article?

Boring. Like when some southern hillbills mixed a little gospel, a little country and a shot glass full of rhythm and blues together and came with the foundation of rock 'n roll, rockabilly music. Boring. Like when Steve Allen opened his late night show in bed - a bed 50 feet up in the air in Times Square. Boring like drive-in movies filled with your best friends - that girl in the

too-tight sweater, jeans and far away eyes and THE BLOB on the screen. Boring like Lenny Bruce and his stripper wife Honey, in the days when you could see strippers, comedians and jazz musicians on the same bill. Boring poets like Ferlingetti, being read in colleges everywhere, writing about how boring life was. But he was selling. And his fans were hateful towards rock music - but were still spending their money on folk and blues. A new definition had arisen in a political consumerist society - you could define your politics and tastes not by what you knew - but by what you bought. And buying was what America did. First televisions, then refrigerators, the 50's were a time of enjoyment and spending. Of developing new pop cultural forms. Yet we are told of the innocent 50's.

Innocent like a switchblade knife. Some restless army vets, many of whom had been called to Korea as well as World War 2, decided it might be fun to get together at the end of their duty end ride bikes. Soldiers have said such things for centuries and never followed through. These guys did it. The result can be seen in THE WILD ONE, which was based on an actual take over of a town by such a biker club.

Kenneth Anger first told me of a gay bar in Chicago called The Gold Coast which had murals painted around the bar in the early 1950's of heterosexuals dressed from head to toe in leather and standing by their bikes. I looked at the paintings (if anyone out there has a photo of them please contact me at once) and couldn't believe it. I talked to the owner and discovered that in the early 1950's the leather/s&mbondage scene was as much hetero as it was gay! I know what you're thinking - people going to bars that catered to their sexual desires and having fun with roles that weren't "simply straight" and they were heteros!?! I know it seems hard to believe - but just down the street were the transvestite shows which drew hetero couples - well,

even up to this day. These leather bars which catered to heteros ended by 1955 when the Democrats called hearings on obscenity and targeted the leather crowd. Heteros went underground. Geys kept the bars afloat. Betty Page was forced to testify in front of the Democrats who held the Inquisition. Using hearings have been a weapon of Democrats since McCarthy. It is unknown if she spotted John F. Kennedy and Senato Kefauver together. According to one recently published book, they would attend the hearings together, get turned on by the hearings and private room of evidence and pick up girls after the hearings ended! For sex parties!

To me, hearings are a euphemism for inquisitions which are European in nature and have nothing to do with our Constitutional frame work at all. They do keep the party not in power in the news, so they have some purpose.

America began worrying about her kids in this period. Horror and crime comic books seemed to lead to real life crime. What else could explain it, since everyone knows kids are by their nature innocent? How many young killers were being found with greased back hair and side bums - could the music of redneck country boys be turning their kids into the same? If rock was integrated and black acts could perform with white, wasn't integration just a step away?

It was no coincidence that the delinquency hearings of 1955 included comic books and obscenity like girls posed in high heels and nylons. If they had been held two years later they would have included rock. The proof is that Democrat Tipper Gore targeted rock over all other media for her dog and pony show that she has going with her husband. (She says she is against censorship, then her husband attempts to pass bills which encourage censorship - and we aren't supposed to notice.)

How many have forgotten that Lenny Bruce was busted for obscenity when a Democrat was in the White House? How come he could do his act uncensored under Ike?

A growing cynicism was spreading throughout the land - it was reflected in the film noir genre, and in a new approach to fan publishing. Up until the 1950's fan magazines usually reprinted whatever the film company gave them. Along came CONFIDENTIAL which decided that rather than follow the image the PR departments had carefully built around the star, they would try to go behind the image. The American public loved watching carefully contrived images knocked down. They still do.

In this issue, you may come face to face with a period you think you know - be forewarned, this is a no-nostalgia peek.

Michael Flores

P.S. Isn't it funny how the exact same people who wanted to ban PLAYBOY, who wanted to censor cable, who want Congress to stop cartoon shows which advertise toy tie-ins, who wanted RAMBO banned and openly worried about the RAMBO mentality (as if there was such a thing), and wanted slasher movies stopped can't believe that anyone would want to take away money from the National Endowment For The Arts (NEA)?

Isn't it funny how the government can force the NEA into not giving money to obscene art, but protestors carry signs attacking only Jessie Helms? (Where were Ted Kennedy and Paul Simon and the rest of the Democrats when that bill went through? Was Helms the only person who voted for it?) Who's kidding who?

Everyone wants to censor something. Me? I want to censor the censors.

Cheers!

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**Contact Bryan Wendorf or Michael Flores at
312/738-0985 for more information!**

IOAM LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

(The following letter is excerpted from several letters from Greg Goodsell.)

Back in the summer of 1989 I contacted SUSAN TYRRELL for an interview, accompanied by Larry Gragg and Stan Farrington. I conducted the entire interview and prepared the questions. The tape of the interview was transcribed by Farrington and was passed off to Weldon as being his. When I discovered this I contacted Weldon and told him it was mine. When I explained that I write for small press publications he said, "Who cares about those fan publications?" I could not believe how rude he was. I asked him to just contact Tyrrell and ask her. He said he would look into it if he had time.

As the publication date drew closer I contacted him, had my lawyer contact him who threatened to slap a restraining order on him unless the interview was returned to me. It never was. He became even more rude and more anti-fan in his comments to me about the "little fan press." Then he went one step further by adding his own name to the article! He wasn't even there!

The magazine came out and Tyrrell told him that the interview was actually done by me. I sent out letters to publications big and small all over the world complaining about his treatment of me, other shocked fans wrote him and asked why. He called and was very apologetic, said he didn't mean his comments about psychotronic film fans but he was only responding to his first call from a lawyer as he never had received a call from one before. He promised to correct the problem in the next issue.

Mike, I have trouble believing fully his apology. He was rude about the fan press before my lawyer called and dismissed anything I had to say because I had only been published in magazines such as DEEP RED, SUBHUMAN, WET PAINT, ZONTAR THE MAG FROM VENUS etc. He also lied when he said it was the first time he'd run into lawyers, as you seem to have had problems with his attitude as well. Still, I hope he keeps his word this time, I guess I'll just have to see.

He assured me his magazine does not sell much, that he is only a fan himself and to please not sue him for this error in judgment.

I was so depressed I was ready to quit fandom.

Finding out in your letter that you were treated even worse by Weldon at least lets me know I'm not the only one. But Mike, you should have told people what Weldon did in your mag. Maybe I wouldn't have been so shocked.

I would like to write for IT'S ONLY A MOVIE and start a Psychotronic chapter like yours in Bakersfield, California. Please send details.

Greg Goodsell
Bakersfield, Ca. 93304

For those who don't know, we had brought Weldon to Chicago on 3 occasions and had heavily promoted his book for 4 years on a monthly basis. We started IOAM as a copy machine zine and differed in Weldon's original zine in that we covered pop culture as a whole, not just films on TV. He opposed us covering rock, comic, TV shows, allowing writers to bring up political ideas, on and on. To my surprise the first issue of his mag came out with all the elements we had in IOAM and that he did not approve of (or so he said).

There was no mention of our group or the shows we've done that have drawn up to 1500 people. Well, it's his mag. I felt hurt, but looking through the mag I saw he didn't mention anyone else either - the fan press that promoted his book year after year was forgotten and not given credit. When I asked him about it he just said they were too small to have an impact.

Next, a review of IOAM and a piece on our film society appeared in JOE BOB BRIGGS zine, WE ARE THE WEIRD, and Weldon's press agent (!) contacted Joe and told him we weren't the real psychotronic (even though Weldon had written for us over 6 times) and Weldon was the only spokesman for these films.

I called Weldon and told him that was dirty pool. He said he didn't know a thing about it, didn't like Joe Bob Briggs (or Film Threat, Re/Search - in fact was delighted that they had the INCREDIBLY STRANGE FILM BOOK idea ripped off by a British TV company), and would ask his PR man, Gary Hertz about it. (Sound familiar Greg?) He said he would clear it up in the next issue, so

would I please continue to sell his mag to my members. Stupidly, I believed him.

It didn't appear. There wasn't room he told my lawyer, and a story would appear later, in the next issue. (Greg, this is what he tells everybody.) So please sell his mag again. Once bitten, twice shy, but I did anyway. You can guess what happened next. He told me I didn't have a tape of his conversation, how can I prove he made the promise. And besides, he was to appear on MTV. And by the way, how many copies of the issue did I want?

I think he will apologize to you, and decline to say how his name ended up on the article. The reason - you could see him from here to kingdom come and probably end up owning the mag. That is why he overnight became a "small zine".

I believe we have expanded the notion of Psychotronic far beyond his original TV guide (he never had a film society in New York) and that we write better. It is up to the people who write and buy his mag to decide whether or not they wish to support him. Anyone wishing to support us or even not take a stand is ok with me. It's your life. To start a chapter write for details.

Mike

Dear Michael,

Hi! I'm a big fan of IOAM. Just thought you'd like to know there has been a Psychotronic Film Society here in Washington, D.C. for about a year. We've shown films and videos at local clubs and Arts Centers. We are also planning a show with the American Film Institute.

We also run a "Psychotronic Hotline" - a periodically up-dated hotline of local psychotronic picks. The number is 202-256-4582. Everyone is welcome to call and even contribute. We charge \$5 for membership, and have t-shirts for \$10. If anyone would like to join, leave a message on the hotline or write me.

Melanie Scott
2023 Allen Place, NW
Washington, D.C. 20009

Great! You know, Flores is a great public speaker on pop culture as well...

Pam "Boom Boom" Smith.

\$ **Illustrator**

\$ **Computer Artist**

\$ **Designer**

\$ **Typographer**

Cover Artist

JAMES NEFF

Born 8 August 1960, Longview, Texas. Transported via divorce to Little Rock, Arkansas 1965. Current Little Rock resident. Tuna Oats. Very Hot Cheese Dip. Art Deco. Bork. Red Vinegar Cold-Sweat R.E.M. Dreams. Strong Tuna Peaks (for both vices). Tuna Oats. Art-Deco. Bork. Red Vinegar Cold-Sweat R.E.M. Dreams. Standard Pagans Race. Celtic-Witch Caucasian-Yetttian. Religion. Calvium. Favorite Films: Wiseblood, Fanny, The Wicker Man, The Man Who Would Be King, Badlands, Diary of a Mad Housewife, Susperia, Bar Fly. Professional Goals: Film Design and Art Direction / Filmmaking and the utter elimination of everyone between myself and my goal. Huh-Huh-bah. Animation, both computer and traditional. To contribute to the revival of Art Deco as a graphics element in all media, and to someday understand the meaning of the word "Slack" from a purely art-saturated, professional existence without the interference of the evils of slack-work.

Note: Always interested in receiving photographs of need females of every possible variety for use as resource material in all current and future artistic projects. All correspondence c/o Mike at the Psychotronic Film Society.



Mike and Pam,
IOAM #2 is another great issue. I enjoyed all the articles and reviews. I too remember the anger about TV violence after Robert Kennedy's murder. It is sad that some folks are willing to believe TV (and Film) violence is turning us into mindless killers. That's an easy answer to a problem that will never end. It would be nice to live in a world where people never killed each other, but senseless killing has gone on for centuries so I doubt banning violence on TV or in movies (or even violent music and pornography) would change the world very much.

Perhaps pointing the finger at TV mayhem as the main source of our problems helps some folks cope with the insanity of this world. Hey, I'm happy for them, but I feel they are wrong. Murder is as old as time itself. It is a dark side of human nature that TV has nothing to do with. Perhaps there are no answers.

The video, RAMPAGING WOMEN is a lot of fun! I look forward to more!

Conrad Widener 110
Atlas Ave S.
Connellsville, PA.

The next video RAMPAGING WOMEN IN THE QUEST FOR BETTY PAGE will be shot on super vhs using a steady-cam (!) by DAN KROGH, biographer and assistant director to HERSCHELL GORDON LEWIS. Next issue we'll have a piece on it's making - and you'll meet the girl who looks like Betty!!! Mike

Coops, outta room, send those letters to our address, LETTERS TO IOAM, P.O. Box 14683, Chicago, IL 60614-0683. When in Chicago, call 312-738-0985 for info on our weekly shows.

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CONFIDENTIALLY YOURS

By Michael Flores



Every Monday morning I head over to Cosmopolitan Drugs on Chicago Avenue to pick up the tabloids and look for the latest gossip magazines. From low brow to high brow, I first pick up the papers - in order of accuracy I get THE NATIONAL ENQUIRER, THE STAR, THE NATIONAL EXAMINER, WEEKLY WORLD NEWS and the brilliant satire of gossip papers, THE SUN. Then I pick up the high brow gossip zines: SPY, VANITY FAIR and DETAILS. It is a weekly habit that first began when I was a kid sitting in beauty parlors waiting for my mother to finish having her hair done. In those days there were gossip magazines chronicling the private lives of Elizabeth Taylor, Richard Burton, Eddie Fisher and other 1960's celebs and near celebs. What I didn't realize as a kid was that these publications owed a debt to a man named Robert Harrison, the creator of CONFIDENTIAL MAGAZINE.

Harrison was a publisher of girlie magazines in the 1940's, and discovered Betty Page (see Jean Howard's article on Betty in this issue). Sold under the counter in most states with titles like WINK, FLIRT and EYEFUL, these magazines featured pin-ups of beautiful women with a twist of fetishism. By the end of 1952 many girlie mags were flooding the market and Harrison decided to print a scandal magazine that would break with the tradition of Hollywood fan mags by going beyond the studio press releases to dig up old and new dirt on the stars. Although many have traced the end of the studio system to everything from television to stars demand-

ing to be free agents, this underestimates the power that CONFIDENTIAL had over the industry.

Hollywood had survived scandals about the mistreatment of child stars. It had survived calls for censorship and the Fatty Arbuckle scandal. It had always won by appeasing the public. But Harrison could not be appeased or bought off. He also did not care if he was called every name in the book. After all, his earlier girlie mags were sold under the counter and blasted from the pulpit. He was immune to being called names. Unlike every other fan publication or newspaper columnist, he had no respect for Hollywood at all. People say that the

tough columnists of the day, Hedda Hopper, Walter Winchell, Irv Kupcinet, Ed Sullivan (he started as a Hollywood columnist) provoked fear in many celebrities. But these columnists liked Hollywood. And while they would blast some stars they would also promote others. To Harrison, there was nothing about Hollywood worth promoting.

Hollywood had built a huge bullshit machine called "The Press Department." Here a star would have his or her name, past and interests changed to draw in the public. Images were created, and, for the most part, were repeated word for word by the "above ground" press of the day. Har-

rierson had watched Senator Kefauver's hearings on organized crime and the railings on television go through the roof as housewives gave up doing housework to watch the inside dirt and scandal. His first issue had a modest print run of 150,000 copies, but it wasn't long before CONFIDENTIAL had become the biggest selling newsstand magazine in America. Hollywood put pressure on Washington to do something about Harrison, he responded by including Washington figures in the magazine as well!

It wasn't long before CONFIDENTIAL had become a name that provoked fear in the powerful circles of Washington and Hollywood. Much of the American press at the time handled Washington the same way they did Hollywood — a press release came down and was printed word for word by the press. Indiscretions known by the press were winked at — Harrison would name names and incidents. First, he bought \$60,000 worth of libel insurance in Europe a year. Anyone who sold him a story or verified a fact would sign a contract that made them equally liable for slander or libel in a lawsuit. Next, he dealt with only one distributor, a company in New York that distributed the magazine all over America. This created a loophole for him — he wasn't actually distributing the magazine all over America — it made successfully suing him an almost impossible task. On his payroll were private detectives, call girls, employees at studios and hotels who kept track of the comings and goings of celebrities. Sometimes agents and studios would cooperate with him. He would tell them what was about to be published about a big star and they would give him lesser stars on a silver platter just to drop the story he was about to run.

In Europe, the United States is often referred to as "The land of hope and denial." Sometimes I wonder how a country that believes in free speech can also believe in libel laws, slander laws, copyrights and trade marks. It seems to me that those things inhibit free speech. It's funny to me that other industrialized countries have much more tax rules governing these things. (In Japan a copyright lasts for only 20 years, in England you can buy a license to release live shows and alternate takes of rock albums and the group gets a piece of the licensing fee,

even though the material is unauthorized. Here in the States, several lower courts have ruled that we have changed our copyright laws so many times that they are incomprehensible.)

The first issue of CONFIDENTIAL in December of 1952 contained an editorial by the editors which contained the following:

"Here you will read about the famous who are infamous; about the glamorous who are deglamorized; about the mugs and the mobs; about high society and low society. Yes, you may be shocked, but at least you'll get the truth without any trimmings...We expect to be called a lot of names..."

The first issue mixed gangsters, politics and show biz. The first article on Hot

Springs, Arkansas alleged that the mob ruled the city with an iron hand, openly running casinos, peep shows and houses of prostitution. It had become a wide open gangsters paradise. The next article was about New York socialites (listed in the social register), who not only ran prostitution rings, but staged orgies for New York's police department! This was followed by an article with photos on torture in southern chain gangs. Next, an article on why sports heroes are lousy lovers — who, at the time, had the highest divorce rate of any American profession.

Next up were two photos "too hot to print." One was a photo of "playgirl daughter" Patsy Ward of the "Birmingham chain store tycoon" running and posing in the street with a blissed-out look on her face in nylons, garter belts and underwear as her frantic body guard chased after her to cover



her up with a jacket. The other photo was a shot of a messenger service head caught in a bedroom with a gorgeous married blonde and trying to throw a telephone at the photographer. The message was clear — no matter how much money you had, no matter how powerful you were — **CONFIDENTIAL** would make sure you were not safe in the bedroom or out. And this was only the first few pages of the the magazine! There was also an article about how 50,000 negroes would vanish from the census every year — because they would pass for white! Then they printed the photos (without the names) of well known scientists, actresses, writers showing which ones were passing for white!

This was followed by an article "World's Queerest Wedding" about two men marrying in France, with photos. They also used lines like, "Everyone was very gay" proving that the word "gay" had a homosexual connotation even in the 50's. Next up was an article on how the mob had changed in Chicago, printing names that I'll be the first to admit even I'm scared to print. I kid you not. Did you ever wonder why Chicago has been a one political party town? This article printed the names of all the Republicans killed by the mob for trying to clean up Chicago! With this article they went even further than Kefauver would dare to go.

Word began to spread through out the beauty parlors of America. Women began buying **CONFIDENTIAL** by the millions. The magazine delved deeper and deeper — sometimes using facts, sometimes innuendo and doctored photos (now a staple of gossip newspapers). The stars tried to fight back, but the loopholes kept them from silencing the magazine (California slander and libel laws did not cover New York slander and libel laws). One of my heroes, Robert "THUNDER ROAD" Mitchum tried after they printed a story which, reading today does stretch the imagination a bit. **CONFIDENTIAL** alleged that Mitchum had drunk two bottles of scotch and showed up at Charles Laughton's for a masquerade ball. They further alleged that he had taken off all his clothes, poured ketchup on himself and danced around the room claiming to be a hamburger! (Groucho Marx once showed up at a Hollywood masquerade party nude, but there was no **CONFIDENTIAL** around at the time.) Actually, I liked the story and would like to believe it was true, just be-

cause I dig Mitchum and have always thought of him as a cool, tough individualist. But the story does sound a bit far fetched. "Ever try to stop a Dancing Hamburger?" winked the magazine. Mitchum sued, but at a press conference admitted he didn't think he could win but he wanted a chance to tell America's women that the story was untrue. Harrison beat the suit by saying he had never done business in California, which was true. He gave his magazines to a distributor in New York. Innuendo got them the most headaches. Sometimes they got away with it — like when they listed all the "women companions" of Marlene Dietrich. Sometimes they didn't.

Doris Duke, the tobacco heiress, was shocked to read an article that alleged that her former chauffeur, a "Prince Paris" from

they would have to take it from Social Security. Frantic Congressmen and Senators rushed home to tell their constituents that Social Security was untouchable and would last forever. Yeah, sure. Then at the height of the obscenity hearings they printed a list of the government agencies that were printing pornography for circulation among the Washington bureaucrats. The FBI was called in. The word went out, "Get **CONFIDENTIAL**".

The FBI was already angry at Harrison. Officially, the FBI claimed that the Mafia did not exist. They did not like this monthly magazine printing stories about a group they claimed did not exist. But no one could figure out how to have overt government censorship of the press without violating the Constitution. Then Harrison provided them with the weapon they needed.

California had called for hearings into the magazine. **CONFIDENTIAL** responded by sending subpoenas to every single Hollywood star they had covered. Almost every single one of them left town! **VARIETY** reported that Hollywood became a ghost town over night. The intimidation had worked.

Harrison printed an article on illegal abortions and the deaths and damage that occurred to thousands of women every year.

CONFIDENTIAL openly speculated on how those deaths would go down if abortion was legal. They were immediately charged with obscenity. The government had them. Harrison negotiated a deal that let him escape with his life and money in 1958 with the promise that he would never print expose-type stories again. (A bizarre court order to say the least.) The magazine was sold many times over the years but never had the circulation or scandal of the original. (With one exception — during the Viet Nam war the owners printed the names of Pentagon officials who had set up houses of prostitution for soldiers in Viet Nam. A visit from the FBI convinced them to sell the magazine.)

CONFIDENTIAL was the 50's without the Ozzie and Harriet veneer that the regular press had. If they did anything positive it was to show that all the problems we have today were around then and probably before. It's just that we like to deny our past and decry our "present day" transgressions. Why can't we have things like they were in the old days? **CONFIDENTIAL** reminds us that we do.



From **CONFIDENTIAL** Vol. 3, Issue 4 - September, 1955

Africa and "former witch doctor" would accompany her to her home to "cure her of insomnia." The article didn't actually claim anything improper happened, but was written in a "nudge-nudge-wink-wink-know-what-I-mean" style that even the dumbest housewife could figure out. Then, stunning actress Liz Scott picked up a copy of **CONFIDENTIAL** and read that her name and home phone number (which they printed!) had been found in a raid at a call girl business that specialized in providing models and actresses for their upper class clients. Again, they did not actually say there was any connection between her and the agency, nor was there any proof to connect her with the "agency." But they pointed out that her name was there (nudge-nudge-wink-wink). Sadly, her career never recovered. Both Duke and Scott sued **CONFIDENTIAL**.

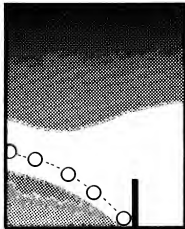
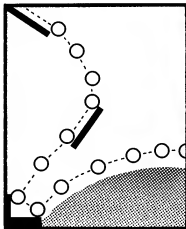
One of Harrison's editors vanished for several days after mob hit men began looking for him. To this day, no one knows how he got out of that. Then they hit Washington's sacred cows. They published an article stating that if the government was ever strapped for cash

Primer for Visual Narratives

1. A Definition:

com·ics \kām-iks/ *n.* (1940): serial publications featuring a sequential visual narrative printed from either black and white or color art

2. Rhythm and Pace:



3. The Source:

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THE DAY COMICS DIED

By Monte Beauchamp

Ever hear an old-timer say "Things sure ain't what they used to be"? Knowing you ITS ONLY A MOVIE readers you probably laughed in the old fart's face, right? Well, we've got news for you - that old-timer was right, especially when it comes to today's newsstand comic books. Those good old days of four color thrills and chills are truly gone forever, kids. The comics available at the stands these days aren't even fit to wipe your rear with — they're guaranteed to give you hemorrhoids!!! But back in the good ol' 1950's there was a publisher with an entire line of comic books that were guaranteed to blow your mind!!! They were called E.C.'s and the wacky wonder behind this fine line of comics was none other than William M. Gaines, publisher of the ever-popular MAD magazine.

Bill Gaines never planned to be a comic book publisher, but fate sometimes works in wondrous ways.

The year was 1947. Bill Gaines got some very unfortunate news. His father, Max Gaines - also the father of the American comic book - had passed on. A freak boating accident was his ticket to those pearly gates.

Max, while employed as a salesman for Eastern Color Printing - a firm that published Sunday comic strip supplements for many of the major newspapers in the Northeast - helped to develop the first comic book give-a-way, FUNNIES ON PARADE, a thirty two page, full color, collection of Sunday comic strip reprints was published in the summer of 1933 as an advertising premium for Proctor and Gamble. It turned out to be so successful that Max, a supreme hustler, persuaded the Wheatena Corporation to try out a similar premium. Released in the fall of the same year, FAMOUS FUNNIES: A CARNIVAL OF COMICS also met with tremendous success.

Sensing they were on to something big, Max and Eastern Color then released a third premium entitled CENTURY OF

COMICS. This super-duper, full color, one hundred page extravaganza was given away by such companies as Wheatena, Milk-O-Malt and Kinney Shoes. It too turned out to be a sizzling success. Max was absolutely astounded at just how popular these premiums proved to be.

Curious as to whether or not children would actually buy these comic book premiums, Max decided to secretly test the market. He put ten cent stickers on the front covers of a pile of premiums and persuaded several newsdealers to put them out on their stands. As he had hoped, the books quickly sold out.

Frantically, he threw together a sixty-four page, full color collection of Sunday comic strip reprints called FAMOUS FUNNIES (Series 1) and struck a deal with the Dell Publishing Company to back a printing of 35,000 copies. Released exclusively to chain stores in 1934, this ten cent comic book was an immediate sell-out.

Max then arranged a deal with Eastern Color to publish FAMOUS FUNNIES on a regular basis. Issue number 1 was released in the spring of 1934 and with issue number 2, FAMOUS FUNNIES became the first monthly comic book in America.

In the years that followed, Max Gaines made a bundle in the lucrative field of comic book publishing.

By 1945, Max was fed up with his business partners. Saying he wanted out of comic book publishing, he sold his share for \$500,000 and announced his retirement. Two weeks later, he bounced back into business with Educational Comics - his very own comic book company. Max was mighty proud of his new line of kiddie comics with such lackluster titles as ANIMAL FABLES, TINY TOT COMICS and FAT AND SLAT. Sales, however, plummeted and continued to do so until quite unexpectedly the business landed in Bill Gaines'



Art by Wally Wood, copyright 1990 by William Gaines

lap. Bill was dead set against continuing his father's funny book business, but his mother decided to try to keep Educational Comics rolling and asked him to help out. Thinking that it would be only temporary, reluctantly he agreed. At the time, Bill was completing his final year at New York University and had planned to pursue a career as a public school teacher.

One sunny afternoon, while Bill was wondering what the hell he was doing trying to run a comic book business, a young artist by the name of Al Feldstein walked through the office doors. As it turned out, Al was bored stiff with his current cartooning career at a major company and was ready for something new. Gaines was so impressed with Feldstein and his luscious comic book drawings of foxy females that he made him an offer which Feldstein gladly accepted.

In the months that followed, Gaines really enjoyed working with Feldstein and another young artist named Johnny Craig. Towards the end of 1949, they had replaced Educational's entire line of kiddie comics with a variety of crime, romance and western comics under a new company banner - Entertaining Comics.

Shortly thereafter, Gaines and Feldstein decided to try something new. Secretly,

they slipped a couple of horror stories they had written into the pages of both of their crime comics. They had a gas writing these twisted tales of terror and since reader response was favorable they decided to ax CRIME PATROL and WAR AGAINST CRIME and replace them with two, brand new, spine-tingling horror comics. THE CRYPT OF TERROR and THE VAULT OF HORROR hit the stands of 1950 and were an immediate success. But the action had only begun! THE HAUNT OF FEAR, WEIRD SCIENCE, WEIRD FANTASY, CRIME SUSPENSORIES, and TWO-FISTED TALES were released later that very same year. Gaines and Feldstein were starting a "New Trend" in comic publishing.

E.C.'s New Trend took America's youth by storm. Kids just couldn't get enough of these twisted tales of terror, torment and shocking science fiction. Unfortunately, by the end of 1951, publishers everywhere were trying to cash in on the horror comics craze that was sweeping the nation. Before long, comic racks were overflowing with scores of spineless rip-offs of TALES FROM THE CRYPT, THE VAULT OF HORROR and THE HAUNT OF FEAR.

While other publishers were content to imitate, E.C. continued to innovate. Gaines and Feldstein - who wrote most of E.C.'s horror and science fiction stories - formulated a rare editorial approach. Rather than place restrictions on their artists, they encouraged them to let loose and develop their own individual styles. The wilder, the better! The excitement that Gaines and Feldstein generated by this approach attracted and inspired artists Al Williamson, Johnny Craig, Graham Ingles, Wallace Wood, Reed Crandell, Jack Davis, John Severin, Will Elder, Harvey Kurtzman, and others to visually create some of the most outrageous, provocative and mind expanding cartoon graphics ever to be printed on the inside of a comic book. For comic-crazed kids, it was truly the beginning of a comic book renaissance.

The creepy-crawly, slime-infested corpses that Ghastly Graham Ingles creatively cranked out within his putrefying panels seemed to slither right off the page and into E.C. readers' laps!

Within those very same pages of now yellowing collector editions could be found the homicidal humor of jolting Jack Davis. Hor-

ror hounds everywhere howled for more of this madman's maniacal but masterful pen work.

The wonderful Wallace Wood blasted WEIRD SCIENCE and WEIRD FANTASY readers out beyond the stars with the most succulent, heavenly bodied, space chicks ever imagined. Is it any wonder then, that with lovely outer space companions such as these, young boys everywhere wanted to grow up to be astronauts?

E.C. fanatics were brought down with a jolt by the pages of CRIME SUSPENSORIES and SHOCK SUSPENSORIES. Here were stories that dealt with racial and religious hatred, adultery, sexual abuse and choke (!) - even murder! The violent visuals of Reed Crandell and George Evans had readers everywhere reaching for barf bags years before they were handed out in cinemas throughout America.

Johnny Craig's dramatically and well designed variety of violent visuals presented viewers with intense, surrealist images of hysteria and hate. CRIME and SHOCK readers, while in the midst of a Craig story, might occasionally catch themselves glancing over their very own shoulders to see if a crazed killer was close behind.

"War is a horrifying hell" was the message that editor/writer/artist Harvey Kurtzman brought to the pain-infested pages of FRONTLINE COMBAT and TWO FISTED TALES. While other comics falsified the realities of war, Kurtzman's did not. In a Harvey Kurtzman story, soldiers

died agonizing deaths, had nervous breakdowns and blew each others brains out. Both sides bled. No one was the winner.

The outstanding artistic efforts that Jack Davis, Wally Wood, George Evans, John Severin, Will Elder and Kurtzman himself put into these two, ten cent comic books were truly incredible, but the amount of research Kurtzman put into them was overwhelming. He was so obsessed with making his stories authentic that he'd spend hours and hours doing research in the American History room at New York's Fifth Avenue Library. He also interviewed war vets, dismantled and reassembled army rifles, flew in a Grumman seaplane and even went as far as to actually send one of his crew down in a submarine to transcribe the sound of a sub's descent onto the panels of one of his comic book stories.

Needless to say, all of this effort left Kurtzman exhausted and with little money to show for all his efforts. To help increase his income, Gaines suggested that Kurtzman edit yet another comic book; one that wouldn't require anywhere near the amount of time and energy that he invested in his war books. For this very reason Kurtzman gave birth to a legend - MAD!

To the pages of TWO FISTED TALES and FRONTLINE COMBAT, Kurtzman brought gut-grinding realism, but to the pages of MAD, he brought laughter. In MAD, Kurtzman primarily poked fun at the popular comic strips of the day; quite quickly though, he moved on to more sacred shores. Movies, television, American



From *Tales From the Crypt*, No. 35, Apr - May, 1953 - Vault of Horror story entitled "Midnight Mess." Art by Joe Orlando, copyright 1980 by William Gaines.

THE NEXT MORNING, THEY FOUND WHAT WAS LEFT OF CHIEF MILLER LYING BESIDE THE NEW FIRE-ENGINE AT THE BOTTOM OF THE DESCENT-POLE IN A POOL OF DRYING BLOOD. HIS ARMS AND LEGS HAD BEEN SEVERED FROM HIS BODY AND HIS TORSO NEARLY SPLIT IN TWO. SOMEONE...OR SOMETHING...HAD REPLACED THE DESCENT-POLE WITH A STEEL STRIP, SHARPENED TO A KEEN RAZOR-EDGE...



literary classics - you name it, all were fair game to Kurtzman and clan. No American institution was safe from the prowling pens of Jack Davis, Will Elder and Wally Wood. Under Kurtzman's reign, E.C.'s madmen produced the most hysterical, toe-ticking imagery ever drawn within the borders of a comic book panel. MAD short-circuited, fried and pickled the minds of millions. As rock star Patti Smith poetically put it: "After MAD, drugs were nothing."

Just like mushrooms after a spring rainstorm, imitations of MAD popped up everywhere. WILD, FLIP, LUNATICKLE and many more tried to emulate MAD'S success. Even Gaines hopped on the bandwagon and released yet another series of zonked out zanyness called PANIC. MAD'S new sister publication, edited by Al Feldstein, featured even more of the crazed cartoonery of MADmen Elder, Davis and Wood. Though PANIC was clearly a cut above the competition, when placed next to MAD, it paled by comparison.

Psychiatrist Frederic Wertham was convinced that comic books were an absolute menace to the mental hygiene of America's youth. He believed that scenes of murder, mayhem and maladjustment, so prevalent throughout the pages of many crime and horror comics, warped the minds of children and transformed them into dope addicts, sexual maniacs and psychopathic

killers. Years of research and clinical case studies had convinced him that comics were a prime contributing factor to juvenile delinquency, a grave social problem that had been on the rise since the end of World War 2.

Wertham was not alone in his beliefs. Popular periodicals of the day often featured articles that cursed the cryptifying contents of crime and horror comics; however the fanatical Frederick Wertham classified all comics as crime comics, and he was determined to clean up the comic racks. Upon publication of his now cult classic, SEDUCTION OF THE INNOCENT, he did just that.

SEDUCTION OF THE INNOCENT - a national bestseller - horrified an entire nation. Parents panicked, teachers trembled and Congressmen cringed over Wertham's scandalous report about how comic books were corrupting the youth of America. Almost overnight, the comic book - a unique and entertaining art form - was condemned.

As various states proceeded to prepare legislation to ban crime and horror comics, parents everywhere started confiscating and burning them by the box full. To prevent children from acquiring more of these putrid periodicals, mothers banded together and boycotted the nation's newsstands insisting the vile vermin be removed forever. Publishers pissed their

pants as more and more intimidated news dealers refused to handle the petrifying periodicals any longer.

Gaines believed that the hysterical charges leveled against crime and horror comics were utter nonsense, and there were many others who shared his belief.

Dr. David Abrahamson, in his book WHO ARE THE GUILTY? wrote, "Comic books do not lead to crime, although they have been blamed for it...In my experience as a psychiatrist, I cannot remember having seen one boy or girl who has committed a crime, or who became neurotic or psychotic...because he or she read comic books."

Dr. Robert H. Felix, director of the National Institute of Mental Health, said that horror comic books do not originate criminal behavior in children, "...in a way the horror comics do some good...children may use fantasy, as stimulated by the 'comics' as a means of working out natural feelings of aggressiveness."

When the Senate Judiciary Committee announced that they would conduct hearings to investigate comic books and their relationship to juvenile delinquency, Gaines requested, and was granted the right to appear before this committee as a voluntary witness to testify in favor of the comics. However, several dozen witnesses including - Good Lord! (Choke!) - Frederic Wertham, showed up to testify against them. Gaines gasped as E.C. was buried alive!

Immediately after the hearings, Gaines organized a meeting with fellow comic book publishers and proposed the formation of an association that would sponsor independent research by psychiatrists and educators to determine once and for all, what adverse effects, if any, crime and horror comics had on children. Unfortunately his proposal backfired.

Instead, many publishers banded together and under former New York magistrate, Charles F. Murphy, established The Comic Magazine Association of America. The most stringent set of rules

and regulations to be found in any area of the entertaining arts was put together by this oppressive organization and was called the Comics Code. Its stamp of approval - required on the front covers of all code approved comics - guaranteed the contents to be wholesome, entertaining and educational. Code-approved comics were distributed throughout America, and publishers that resisted joining this association, ran the risk of having their books refused distribution.

To survive in such a restrictive publishing environment, Gaines and Feldstein realized they had quite a bit of restructuring to do. They discontinued E.C.'s entire line of crime and horror comic books and put together a New Direction in comic book publishing. IMPACT, ACES HIGH, EXTRA, M.D., PSYCHOANALYSIS and VALOR, all joined New Trend survivors - MAD, PANIC, PIRACY and INCREDIBLE SCIENCE FICTION. Whatever high hopes Gaines may have had for E.C.'s new direction were soon demolished. Continual conflicts with the comics code, distribution dif-

ficulties and piss poor sales forced him to make a extremely difficult decision - to discontinue E.C.'s entire line of color comics. Fortunately, he had one ace left in the hole.

Shortly after the release of E.C.'s New Direction, Gaines and Kurtzman reached an agreement to convert MAD into a slick, black and white, sixty-four page magazine.

TALES FROM THE CRYPT

This new format allowed Kurtzman the opportunity to bring a more sophisticated look to MAD, plus, it offered one other distinct advantage that as a comic book, MAD did

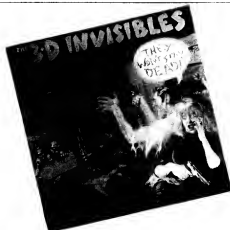
not have - it was finally free of the accursed Comics Code!

The first magazine-sized issue of MAD was an instant sell-out. To meet distributor demand, Gaines rushed back to press for an additional 50,000 more issues.

MAD's success as a magazine inspired Gaines and Feldstein to launch yet another publishing venture called Picto Fiction - a new form of adult entertainment. SHOCK ILLUSTRATED, CRIME ILLUSTRATED, TERROR ILLUSTRATED and CONFESSIONS ILLUSTRATED were designed to match MAD's new magazine-sized format, but unfortunately they came nowhere near to matching MAD's financial success. After just a few forgettable issues, they were quietly laid to rest. All that was left was MAD.

Almost single-handedly, Frederic Wertham had devastated and demolished an entire book industry.

c Copyright 1990 Monte Beauchamp



"Gruesome guitars explode from coffins and slither out of the darkness. Deadly drums pound your brain like a Texas sledgehammer. You will shake in terror as booming bass batters your being like a jolt from Dr. Frankenstein."

—Transylvania Times

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Why women love...

High heels,
silk stockings
and

BETTY PAGE!

By Jean Howard



I don't know about you other Psychotronic Women's Auxiliary members, but something really special happens the moment I fasten the last hook and eye of a vintage bustier. It's not just the feeling of long lines of snug encasement as the sewn-in stays run up and down your torso. It's not just the lace, a little bow between the breasts, cups sewn like sculpture, and the lines — long elegant lines that pinch in the waist, round out the hips, skirt over fannies Betty Grable style.

For me there's always an extra punch, a deeper significance to a sexual experience provoked by images from past generations. It happens with garters, especially old ones, with stockings (Cuban heels, please), with petticoats, peignoirs, high heels, gloves, hats, even lipstick. Every generation has their tricks, from the forties burgundy lips, to my mother's stiletto heels with their provocative pointed toes.

This is the same magic, the same sensual trip I experience in viewing Betty Page

material. From my first viewing, it was immediately to my liking. What's not to like? "Pin-up King" Irving Klaw picked a winner with Betty Page. Not only was she a versatile model, able to achieve a variety of looks, a good worker — photo sessions being scheduled every three weeks on Saturday and running 3-4 hours, followed usually by dinner with Irving and his sister Paula; but Betty had an irresistible combination. Her wholesome girl-next-door smile, her full child-bearing hips, and voluptuous long black hair (topped with page-boy bangs), and she never complained about the positions!

Irving recognized these qualities at her first photo session. "Betty Page", as she spelled her name, the farm girl from Nashville, Tennessee, was soon to become Irving's most outstanding offering. He considered her his lucky charm, and rightfully so.

From the modest used book and magazine shop in lower Manhattan, to a

thriving mail-order business (the G.I.s from World War 2 gave this business a great boost), Irving and his sister, Paula, became acquainted with a lot of swell girls. They became like family members to the Klaw's. How their association with these models began is an interesting story in itself. At one point, Klaw's book business turned into a pin-up photo business with pin-ups of movie stars, bathing beauties, cowboy stars, etc. Sometimes these photos featured stars in bondage or getting spanked. As you can imagine, word spread that you could also order these photos through Irving's new mail-order catalog and the demand grew.

In 1947, Anais Nin-like, a prosperous customer came their way. He was a well-known lawyer and was interested in custom photos created for his own collection featuring young women bound and gagged in their street clothes. Irving had to secure equipment, models, etc. but not only was he to be paid for his effort, he was also al-

lowed to sell copies of these photos in his store. This was all the incentive Irving needed. Well, you know how these things go, one thing lead to another and pretty soon Irving's photos were featuring young women bound and gagged in their bras and underpants! Interestingly enough, he found more backers. Of course, he needed more models, and here's where Betty Page walks in on seven inch heels. Betty was a natural for bondage. She had a playfulness that can be seen in her best selling bondage photo: Betty ala mouth-gag, waist cinch, arm ropes, ankle and thigh straps, seems delightful. She had a way of taking the edge off. She also, along with the other model's in Klaw's photos, never appeared nude in these photos. Whether to avoid the obscenity classification, or recognizing his customers' preferences, Irving, I feel, made the right choice. I've viewed photos of Betty Page both nude, and in a full black brief, French-cut bra, seamed hose, and long evening gloves, and, hands-down, the latter photo had more of the right stuff.

Not only that, but they were created in the right way. Paula Klaw from the very beginning participated in the photo sessions. That not only added a safety factor for the models, but it provided a feminine hand in helping the models get into restraining positions. I'm sure the other Women's Auxiliary members will agree, it is an assuring thought knowing that Betty was bound up by Paula Klaw-Kramer (her married name). In fact, in 1951, Paula took over all of the photography and movie production, including posing, directing and shooting. Irving concentrated on merchandising.

A woman directing women in bondage-lingerie scenes has even extra appeal, I think. Certainly the comfortability, the fine lingerie, the fresh quality of their model, combined with well-crafted props and sets, bring us what we view today as the classic wholesome titillation of the Klaw's Betty Page.

Betty did work for other photographers. Besides the Klaw's publications, her photos appeared in WINK, TITTER, and BEAUTY PARADE. But it was the thousands of Klaw photos, many of which were featured in Ir-

ving Klaw's mail order magazine, CARTOON AND MODEL PARADE that brought her image and name to the grateful masses of red-blooded pin-up and bondage hounds. She wasn't making a bad living from the Klaw's, either. Earning \$100 a shoot, Betty must have been plenty concerned when in 1954, the FBI showed interest in Irving Klaw's work. Apparently, Irving had already captured the attention of New York's Postal Inspector when a frantic parent complained that his sixteen-year-old had received a copy of CARTOON AND MODEL PARADE in the mail (lucky kid!). At that time, no action was taken. Klaw's material did not qualify as obscene.



But that was not the end of the government's benevolent concerns about Irving Klaw and his business. In 1954, the FBI, with a little nudging from their New York office, became inspired with the notion that Irving Klaw might be in violation of the Interstate Transportation of Obscene Material. Imagine their chagrin when the courts determined that obscene material "must arouse or excite the normal person," whereas Klaw's material was targeted to the "sex pervert" types, therefore falling outside of the legal description of obscene material.

Still, the tight-ass mores of the fifties were bound to catch up with the Klaw's. The nation was in a panic over juvenile delinquency. (Where are all these delinquents now - in jail? I know my brother, who definitely qualified as a delinquent in the fifties, is now a home owner, father of six, and traveling sales rep.) In response to this mania, the government decided to take a stand. You can imagine the rest. Typical McCarthy-type manipulating of information went on in the resulting Senate hearings. Comic books were being examined and banned. Psychiatrists were making correlations between erotic stimuli in teenagers and gang violence and killings.

I'm sure it all made sense in some "healthy" middle-class American way, especially to the zealous Senator Keafauver. Unfortunately, Irving Klaw, along with other photographers, got pulled right into the middle of it, and which means so did Betty Page (to the point of even having to testify about the outfits she wore in Klaw's photos. I would have loved to hear that!)

Ultimately Klaw was found guilty, though the verdict was overturned by the Federal Court of Appeals. The tragedy lies not only in the stress, financial loss, and termination of his work, but in a move to help lessen a possible prison sentence, Irving agreed to destroy all of his bondage materials and work. Eek! The vision of Paula Klaw shredding their material images of wonderful Betty Page administering spankings to blonde girlfriends-turned-slaves is enough to make one's stomach turn.

What of Betty Page? Rumors have her in Florida, married with children, not interested in her fan club or public appearances. My feeling is that I would love to hear her stories, see more photos and film footage, but the small Klaw bounty that was saved from destruction is enough for me. Like beautiful old French postcards, with their erotic smell of musk and French toiletries, the Klaw/Page footage is as precious as it is scarce. Let us learn a strong lesson and be satisfied.

Thanks to: The Betty Pages, Greg Theakston, Joe Anderko

JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF A MIND: JOHN DRAKE INTERVIEW

By Michael Flores

My first face to face exposure with Detroit rock and roll was in 1968 in Atlanta Georgia. JIMI HENDRIX was the star of the show, I think the VANILLA FUDGE were on the bill as well. And the AMBOY DUKES. Three acts for \$3. There were two shows, both were sold out. I had tickets for both shows. This was a big deal. Rock bands rarely travelled the southern circuit at the time, and the acts were usually shocked to discover Atlanta's large hippie community, which actually lasted several years longer than California's and New York's. Partly because it took longer for crystal methedrine ("speed") to get into the community, partly because Atlanta women resisted feminism much longer than their northern counterparts. (Some will argue that they still do.)

Detroit music always packed a punch, the Black Detroit sound had swept the music world, integrating pop radio at the same time. The white kids were taking their frenzied energy and coming up with a music and stage presence that was different from the black sound and yet was different from the white laid back hippie bands as well. It was unique. IGGY AND THE STOOGES, MITCH RYDER, THE MCS and the band that took its name from a famous street gang and Hal Ellison book, THE AMBOY DUKES. Detroit bands not only danced on stage, they leapt into the audience with their music blasting away.

The opening act that night was THE AMBOY DUKES. They blew Hendrix off stage (no mean trick, he seemed bored, stoned and incoherent) as singer JOHN DRAKE leapt with TED NUGENT into the audience and all over the stage. The crowd went nuts. THE AMBOY DUKES were barred from playing the second set (the full story is revealed here for the first time) and I got a rare opportunity to see future deity JIMI HENDRIX blown off stage.

Rich Taylor (from the WIG HATS), "Boom Boom," and I had a chance to party with JOHN DRAKE, the DUKES' lead singer. Here's the result.

DRAKE: You guys want some frosty beers?

IQAM: *Yeah! I've always been fascinated by the music that came out from Detroit. From the black sound to the high energy white music.*

DRAKE: See this 45? This is high energy rock. It's the MCS doing a couple of songs never recorded on any album. This was the last release they did for Elektra. They got into a lot of trouble over saying "Kick out the jams, motherfuckers" on their LP. Hudsons, a store out of Detroit that just recently bought Marshall Fields was where a lot of kids went to buy records. Hudsons told the label they would not sell the LP because of that word.

The MCS re-cut the LP and changed the word to "brothers and sisters," but Hudsons said that was just as inappropriate and did not suit the Hudsons image. Meanwhile, JOHN

SINCLAIR, who founded a group called THE WHITE PANTHERS that was like the BLACK PANTHERS only more naive, ran an article with the head-line, "ROCK WITH THE MCS, FUCK HUDSONS." Hudsons dropped the entire line of the record company! They shipped back everything from

THE DOORS on! Elektra told the band they were off the label and they recorded this 45 called "Tonight" to complete the contract. Nobody heard it. It rocks.

IQAM: *The MCS were the only band to play the 1968 Democratic Convention. I've always admired them for that.*

DRAKE: The MCS headlined where ever they played, but no record label would touch them after the Elektra problems. Drugs were also a serious problem with the band, and I don't mean pot or LSD. I never met anyone that consumed hard drugs the way the Motor City 5 did!

(The song comes on - holy smokes! It sounds like the band had actually learned to play their in-



THE AMBOY DUKES: John Drake (second from left), Ted Nugent (far left)

struments! It may be the best song they ever did.)

DRAKE: You notice I have 45's, no CD's. I don't need the stuff re-digitized or re-anything. I like hiss on records - hell, pizza stains don't bother me.

RICH: I've got lots of records in that condition!

IOAM: How did you get into rock music?

DRAKE: In 1963 it all started with a band called THE LOURDS. I was 16 and TED NUGENT was 15. We played lots of rhythm and blues. As a kid I didn't care for THE BEATLES, I saw all those dolls and toys and thought "hardy-har-har. Did I think wimps - you bell!"

IOAM: I think people today forget they were first marketed like NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK.

DRAKE: Then the STONES came along, they were ugly compared to THE BEATLES. Every basement band was trying to sound like THE BEATLES but the STONES offered an alternative way to go. They were into blues Chicago-style and even recorded at Chess Records. I listened to WCHB in Detroit, I think I was the white listener they had, listening to Frantic Ernie Durham and The Butterball who would on occasion ask the audience to show up around the back of the stations with a six-pack! The STONES had a big influence on me.

IOAM: What happened when you got out of school?

DRAKE: The war in Viet Nam! Everybody was getting out of it. I could have gotten out of it. It was so damn easy it wasn't funny. But my dad was on the beaches of Normandy, his brother went to Korea, I doubt we'd have ever been able to get along if I hadn't. Even though I was trained for combat I ended up in Texas! That's the Army for you.

IOAM: Did TED NUGENT keep a space in the band for you?

DRAKE: Yeah, I got out and we went to Chicago to record at Universal Studios in Chicago.

RICH: Isn't that where JIMMY REED recorded?

DRAKE: Oh yeah, that's where all the blues guys recorded. It was 4 track. Real raw stuff. I've always felt that if you can keep it simple you can deliver.

IOAM: How did the name THE AMBOY DUKES come about?

DRAKE: STEVE FARMER came up with that. He also wrote "Journey to the Center of the Mind." We'd had a hit with "Baby Please Don't Go," were watching TV and trying to come up with a follow-up. The theme for BONANZA came on and if you listen close you'll hear that "Journey" is also the BONANZA theme changed a little and played really fast.

"Journey to the Center of the Mind" bailed us out of a lot of debt!



John Drake

IOAM: What was TED NUGENT like during this period?

DRAKE: A wimp. He was into hunting even then. He got me to go running around hunting for birds and anything that moves but that got tired to me real fast. We'd call Ted and say we had some beers, let's go party. His mom would get on the phone and say, "Theodore, it's time to do your studies," and that was that! He'd say, "Yes mumslie" and there was no rocking that night!

He was in constant fear of his parents, he was not even allowed to have long hair! I'd tell him to just wear his hair long but he wouldn't. His parents even told him what to wear!

IOAM: Was "Journey to the Center of the Mind" about drugs?

DRAKE: Oh god no. It had nothing to do with drugs at all.

IOAM: Oh come on, you're gonna go to hell for lying.

DRAKE: First of all, I never saw TED take any mind altering substance, legal or otherwise. Nothing. Ever. STEVE FARMER did lots of music with a science fiction bent and that was one of them. This was before Heavy Metal would do every song about those themes. Steve and Ted were always at each others throats and I was the guy in the middle. Typical band shit.

We did a follow-up to "Journey" that really sucked. It hit 100 and died. We released another which should have been the follow-up to "Journey." "Surrender to Your Kings."

IOAM: Oh yeah! "You surrender to your kings, acceptin' all the words they bring, then you find out too late, they used you for bait, the bluebird continues to sing!"

DRAKE: Oh shit. How on earth do you remember this stuff? We had a bass player who had done some work with THE CRYIN' SHAMES, LARRY JASHEL. Hell, the DUKES were formed in Chicago for all intents and purposes. We went to Detroit but the guys in the band, who were all homesick, wanted to go back to Chicago! We found a couple of other guys, Greg and Andy and went to New York to record at The Brill Building with ROY SICALLA who did THE RASCALS. We also did some gigs with GENE "Town Without Pity" PITNEY then too.

IOAM and RICH: WOW!

IOAM: JOHN WATERS calls him a big influence! And you heard him sing live?!

DRAKE: Mike, he had a three octave voice, and I heard it live.

IOAM: What the hell happened with the Hendrix shows in Atlanta?

DRAKE: We had a guarantee for big bucks to tour with him. It was weird, JIMI would have nothing to do with MITCH MITCHELL and NOEL REDDING off stage. Nothing. So I was sitting around drinking wine with them and headed off to see how TED was doing in the dressing room. NUGENT copped an attitude. He said he could blow Hendrix off stage just by using the same stage tricks and gimmicks. You know, playing the guitar with his

teeth and behind his back, that Hendrix had stopped doing and was trying to get away from. Sure enough, when he got out on stage he did it. The crowd went nuts.

IOAM: What did HENDRIX do after you got a standing ovation?

DRAKE: Over the objections of the promoter he wouldn't let us play the second show, which sold out right after we left the stage. People were lining up to buy tickets from the audience right after we left the stage. It was amazing. HENDRIX said he wouldn't play if we went on and that was that.

Flores, how did you know about that show? It was never written up that I know of.

IOAM: I was there.

DRAKE: Oh geez. I don't even know why I ask. CHAS CHANDLER called from England and said they would pay us for all the shows not to play. Easiest money I ever made. Everyone who worked there came out to congratulate us.

IOAM: What was the story about the Gornham Hotel in New York?

DRAKE: Oh man. What is this, blackmail or what? All the bands stayed there ... we were there for awhile. The YARDBIRDS and THE WHO stayed there while we were there. How did you know about that?

IOAM: I heard about it as a kid. It made the *Chelsea* look tame, if only half the stories I heard were true.

DRAKE: THE YARDBIRDS were so nice. I raised a lot of hell with JIMMY PAGE and KEITH RELF. I saw the last show THE YARDBIRDS played. They were really nice, non-judgemental people. JIMMY PAGE was very open minded.

IOAM: How about groupies?

PAM: Mike heads for the dirt.

DRAKE: This guy! There were PLASTER CASTERS imitating the Chicago originals all over the country. Who knows if the ones I found were the real ones. I just might be in someone's collection, but that is all I'm saying. I can't believe we've gone from THE YARDBIRDS to sticking my privates in plaster!

IOAM: It's rock'n roll!

DRAKE: Keith Richards stayed at the Gornham and had a cane - out of one end was a knife, out of the other was the barrel of a gun! Anybody trying to pick a fight with that guy was in for a hell of a shock! KEITH RELF died when a radio fell in his bath. That was tragic.



I remember one day KEITH MOON showed up with four bottles of gin and \$38 worth of dirty magazines and asked me if I felt like partying. I passed and left him to his own devices. He took a screwdriver out and unscrewed everything in the room that had a screw on it! The hotel managers broke the door down and he was standing there pissing into a suitcase with that smile on his face. And the hotel didn't throw him out! That was what the Gornham was like. Finally THE WHO tossed M-80's into the hallway one night and blew holes in the floor and ceiling. That got them thrown out. They weren't really into drugs, that was the legal stuff - booze!

IOAM: KEITH MOON was the rock'n roll spirit.

DRAKE: We did a show with THE WHO in Florida and I saw PETER 'HERMANS HERMITS' NOONE push MOON into a pool. He knocked out his two front teeth. MOON was ready to kill the guy. I helped get him to the hospital but I want you to know by the time he got out he was drunk again! NOONE got the hell out of the hotel!

IOAM: What about IGGY?

DRAKE: JAMES OSTERBERG was using the name THE PSYCHEDELIC STOOGES when I first saw them. Then it was THE STOOGES. He was out of his fucking mind. The stories about him bleeding and pissing on stage were nothing. He was plugged so directly into Detroit energy it was burning him. He had the music, the presence, the chops, but no idea what to

do with it. Add hard drugs to that and you have a mess.

When you saw IGGY live the songs were all in one key but I didn't care. I just hope people who see him now respect his act and music - the hippies hated him. He was high energy, they were laid back. The more they ignored him the wilder he got. He was a lot of fun, but, Mike, he was also a musician. I could tell. He wasn't given much of a chance outside of Detroit.

IOAM: There was a great all-girl band at the time called THE PLEASURE SEEKERS. SUZI QUATRO's first band.

DRAKE: THE PLEASURE SEEKERS? Oh Christ. How on earth do you know about THE PLEASURE SEEKERS?

IOAM: I like the 45 "What a Way to Die" about consuming large quantities of beer. I know Suzi and her sister were in the band.

DRAKE: Rich, picture this - Flores lived in Atlanta at this time and he knows about a band that most people in Detroit never heard of.

IOAM: SUZI's sister PATTI is the mom of breathtaking SHERILYN FENN who plays Audrey on "Twin Peaks."

DRAKE: No kidding. I'll be. They stayed at the Gornham for a while. Their brother, Michael played keyboards on THE LAWRENCE WELK SHOW and was booking us all over the country.

I had it bad for PATTI. She took my breath away whenever she came around. And now her kid is on "Twin Peaks." Wow. You folks want to hear more records?

IOAM: Yeah, I'll grab some brews.

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GENE SIMMONS

TALES FROM THE KISS

By Dale Sherman

Illustrations by Larry Blake

You may not know this, but we are coming up on the 20th anniversary of the band KISS.

Okay, most of you are probably not hopping up and down in anticipation. The band has certainly fallen from its millions of fans it had at its zenith in the 70's. Most people today consider the band to still be a "kiddie band" or "just another heavy metal band." However, I believe that KISS was and is one of the few examples of psychotronic music from the 70's mainstream that never stopped to change their opinions or their attitude towards their work.

THE NEW YORK DOLLS were one of the first in the 70's to hit the headlines (at least in the New York-oriented rock mags), but after a disastrous U.K. tour (ending with the death of their drummer) they were never able to build up the momentum they had started. David Johansen, the Dolls' lead singer, is now doing cocktail music as Buster Poindexter and thinking it's hip. Alice Cooper was tearing up the headlines, but Vince was just about ready to go on his own in '73. He ended the 70's doing sloppy movies, playing golf and appearing on Bob Hope specials. He's finally back in gear, but it took him until the late 80's before he got it going again. Ziggy Stardust was freaking out the world, but Bowie was ready to crash land the Spiders so he could transform himself into his "Thin White Duke" persona, and make art films. You get the idea.

KISS started in January of 1973, formed by 4 individuals who were fed up with the way their earlier bands had gotten nowhere. Paul Stanley and Gene Simmons had worked on a failed album for CBS with their group WICKED LESTER; Peter Criss had seen the dismal sales and failure of his band CHELSEA; Paul "Ace" Frehley was going from gig to gig, band to band, never fitting into the niche he was supposed to be in. After seeing the Dolls perform they decided what direction they wanted to go. The Dolls performed on stage in dresses, when the dresses didn't work out, they decided to go another way; to shock with make-up, explosions and gore.

By October of 1973, they had signed up with Neil Bogart's new record label Casablanca. Already the band had their personas down flat, although the make-up was not quite there yet (and would evolve through out the years). They had the costumes (most of which were home-made), the explosions, a neon logo behind them in shows. They were willing to try anything to get attention. If it took doing private parties for transvestite singer Wayne County or spitting blood on stage, that is what they would do. After all, it was the seventies.

KISS' first big break came at the New Year's show at The Academy of Music, where they opened for TEEN-AGE LUST, IGGY POP and BLUE OYSTER CULT. After their first number, two people clapped. By the end of their show, they had

the whole audience in their grip. This concert was also one of the first times Gene Simmons had tried his fire spitting in public, and succeeded in selling his hair on fire in the process. As roadies put out the flame, the audience went nuts thinking they were about to see a man kill himself on stage. When Variety reviewed the show a few weeks later, KISS got most of the mention and glory. Pretty good for a band that was not even mentioned in the ads for the show.

With this success behind them, and the release of their first album in February of 1974, the band wanted to tour. And took any tour coming their way. This led to them opening for acts from 10cc to ZZ TOP, from Suzi Quatro to The Raspberries, Frigid Pink to Renaissance. The band also had to deal with several headlines not wanting to have KISS open for them. With the explosions, make-up, Gene's fire and blood-spitting and a logo that was now four-feet tall, they would frequently have to subdue there act because they would upstage the headliners (ZZ Top and Steppenwolf to name a couple). On the last night of a two week tour with BLACK OAK ARKANSAS in which they were forbidden from using special effects, they pulled out all the stops, ending with Criss "accidentally" setting fire to BOA's backdrop with his drum-sticks that shot flares. KISS had to pay for the damages.

The band was also to appear in some of the strangest photos at this time of their career: a series of photos featuring a



blitzed-out Peter and Paul at a party (of which a couple were used for the back cover of the *HOTTER THAN HELL* album), photos of the band members with a pig's head on a platter (uh...don't ask me, I don't know why...) and, most outrageous, a series of photos of the band with a woman featuring a variety of whips and chains, and a little nudity.

All this hard and weird work paid off. By the end of '74, the band performed back in New York at sold-out shows... this time with Blue Oyster Cult opening for them!

1975 saw the release of *ALIVE I*, a live album that saw the band finally breaking through their cult-status and into the mainstream. Kids, whose parents had finally become accustomed to the sight of Alice and friends, now had new heroes to scare their folks with. The album did so well that it kept Casablanca Records solid after the disastrous bomb *TONIGHT SHOW* double album. *ALIVE I*, and every album up to *CREATURES OF THE NIGHT*, also featured something in the album packaging that had not been done in mainstream adult music since the Beatles - extras. The albums didn't just have a record in the sleeve, it had posters, stickers, rub-on tattoos, bubble-gum cards, scrapbooks, mer-

chandise-lists, even a cardboard Platinum album to stick on your wall.

As the packaging grew bigger, so did the crowd. A group of fans from Indiana started *THE KISS ARMY*. There was an official fan-club, a newsletter, and merchandise springing up as time went on. Shirts, jackets, motorized toys, dolls, lunchboxes, Viewmaster slides, and even the comics.

Their next album, *DESTROYER*, featured the band on the cover as superheroes. The artwork, by well-known artist and Frazetta's son-in-law Ken Kelly, along with the comic-book form of the song "God Of Thunder", helped create the notion by many people of the band members' personas as superheroes characters. The next step was easy. The band first appeared in comic book form on the pages of #13 and 14 of *HOWARD THE DUCK* as demons. It was only a three-page shot, but enough to convince Marvel to do a special featuring the band as heroes in the Spider-man mode. The network news was even there as the band showed up to put vials of their blood into the red ink used for the printing of the album ("Printed in real KISS blood!" screamed the cover). While the artwork was not the greatest, the writing by Steve Gerber held it all together.

So now the band was generating a fan-following that consisted of people from young to old. They were appearing on television from *PAUL LYNDE'S HALLOWEEN SPECIAL* to *LAND OF HYPE AND GLORY* when most bands thought it beneath their dignity to do so. They were filming video clips for songs back in '75, when most bands never thought of them. They were doing things and keeping their interest in aspects of culture when most bands were only interested in their "art". They were criticized for that, but they never changed their attitude. While there was "Beth", there was also "Detroit Rock City" (one of the best "Teenage Death" songs around), "Plastercaster," "Love Gun" and "Sweet Pain". Songs that a lot of groups would not have had the nerve to do (and would probably get them in trouble today...).

With the success of the comic and television work, came the idea of doing a full-length film. At the same time came work by the four members on solo albums to be released simultaneously, a second comic book, and a greatest hits package. The band was flying high and successful, but that was soon to change.

The film, **KISS MEETS THE PHANTOM OF THE PARK** (aka **PHANTOM OF THE PARK** and **KISS MEETS THE PHANTOM** and **ATTACK OF THE PHANTOMS**) appeared on Halloween night in 1978 on NBC and looked ridiculous. A Hanna-Barbara production that looked worse than a Scooby-Doo episode, the only good moments were in song and Anthony Zerbe as the villain. The movie was totally re-edited and received vastly different response in the European and Australian markets, sadly it is still only available in the States in its original tv form.

Complaints became louder as the material began to glut the market. The solo albums were released, a million copies of each, at the same time. Not everyone could afford to buy all 4 at once, and the albums began showing up in the cut out bins. The band began to look more and more like a fading star. There was too much stuff to buy, and fans were beginning to wonder if maybe the comments about "just Hype" were true.

KISS still had their following, and the shows kept getting bigger (leading to Gene's **DYNASTY** tour trick of flying over the audience from the stage to a tiny platform during "God Of Thunder"). However, fans were getting dissatisfied, especially after the release of the disco song, "I Was Made For Loving You." With the loss of Criss in late '79, the fans were not sure what would happen next.

The band soon hired a new drummer, Eric Carr, and went on a world wide tour of Europe and Australia in '80. They soon began work with Bob Ezrin on a concept album, **MUSIC FROM THE ELDER**. The album features a lot of good work, and something of a story-line, and was to be continued on another album and a possible film. The album also features the work of Tony Powers and Lou Reed on some of the songs! The album is now a collectors item but it flopped badly and vanished quickly.

1982 saw the release of the **CREATURES OF THE NIGHT** LP which, although featured Ace on the cover, introduced Vinnie Vincent (a session player who had worked with Felix Cavaliere and Laura Nyro) into the band. The tour to follow featured a stage transformed into a giant tank, and was the last tour to feature make-up. The tour ended in Brazil, a series of shows for over a half million fans.

With the end of the make-up came the end of one era for the band. The band still continues, but at a slower pace than before. They still manage to startle, as the tour for their latest album **HOT IN THE**



SHADE proves, still blowing younger bands like **FASTER PUSSSYCAT** and **SLAUGHTER** off the stage. A stage which now includes a talking sphinx head that shoots lasers from its eyes.

Let's not forget Gene's solo work in the movies. There are not a lot of people who are willing to play a variety of villains, much less one like the hermaphrodite in **NEVER TOO YOUNG TO DIE**. Plus he helped to push **SABLE**, one of the few serious attempts at an adaptation of a comic-book character to television.

At first glance you might think KISS was not important, or that they had no influence on the way the music world is today. I believe they did and still do. By breaking in the audience to a stage presence that was completely out and beyond the mainstream they taught little kids to look beyond weird stage mannerisms and to appreciate things different. The punk movement wouldn't have been stopped - but the audience was

already conditioned to enjoy and accept the wild and the weird. You certainly would not be seeing the amounts of make-up on bands that you do now. Their influence is felt in hard rock and heavy metal. They've been covered by such bands as **POISON**, **DEATH ANGEL** and **RED CROSS**. They even took chances with young bands, bands that no one else would sign for their first tour. Perhaps remembering the ill-treatment they received from so many bands they go out of their way to offer bands that first exposure. That list includes **JUDAS PRIEST**, **CHEAP TRICK**, **QUEENSRYCHE**, **IRON MAIDEN** and many more.

There are a lot of people who owe thanks to this band. They may not have created anything overtly new, but they certainly helped move the time along while they were doing it. Something we should all thank them for.

2 LIVE CREW



ME SO CENSORED

By Michael Flores

It all began with a vicious political campaign. Jack Thompson was running against incumbent Janet Reno for the office of Dade County State Attorney. At one point, Ms. Reno was asked to confess her sexual preference. At an angry debate Ms. Reno placed her hand on Thompson's shoulder and he slapped it away as she told him to calm down. He filed criminal assault charges against her for the touch. She won. After the election Thompson discovered that she had hired Luther Campbell to do her campaign song. And that Campbell was the leader of 2 LIVE CREW. Before he heard the record, he declared he would get Campbell for obscenity.

Ok, here's the problem.

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances."

I don't know if you caught the problem, most commentators and writers on the 2 LIVE CREW controversy have missed the one word in the First Amendment that should make them stop and think. It says "Congress." It does not say "Your job." It does not say "your school." It does not say "Your shopping mall." It says "Congress." That word, is it a loop hole? Why does it only say "Congress"?

And where the hell is the ACLU?

Is the attack on 2 LIVE CREW racial in origin? You best be sitting down when you read this article, although it may not sit well. Unless you live under a rock you have heard all about the bust of Luther Campbell and crew for obscenity in Florida. There have also been record store busts in Texas for their album AS NASTY AS THEY WANNA BE. As soon as I heard of the bust in Florida I went out and bought the double LP. I have yet to play the second record. I have watched the video, "Banned in the USA," directed by Penelope Spheeris and found that to be far more entertaining. I strongly urge you see this documentary. I do like the song, "Me So Horny," which is actually pronounced "HONEE" and is a sample from the film FULL METAL JACKET. The record, however, does not capture the ambience of anarchy and "anything goes" attitude that the live performances embody.

So you can buy the album and the video and help Mr. Campbell with his enormous legal fees. (The average small quantity drug bust costs the government \$150,000 to prosecute. I can only imagine what this obscenity case will end up costing the state of Florida.) While you are buying the album ask the clerk if he has any records by one of the pioneers of dirty dance songs, BLOWFLY. In the Black community, "Blue" performers have gone in and out of style for decades. Even in the white community doing blue comedy was so popular at the

turn of the century that a blue comedian played the White House, to no criticism. There were also white acts who over the years have done dirty limericks and double entendres. But in the Black community thanks to the chittin' circuit and segregation, these acts have had periods of great popularity. REDD FOX opened many doors with his double meanings, but RUDY RAY MOORE took explicit words to new extremes - these weren't just words that could be taken more than one way, this was explicit x-rated language. It was only a matter of time before someone would come along and attach music to the words, and that task fell to BLOWFLY. From disco to CB radios, no working class fad was immune from the humor and dirty talk of BLOWFLY. For me, his crowning achievement was "Pomo Freak" with still listenable silly songs like "Maricon," "The Girl Wants to Fuck," and the title track, "Pomo Freak," an homage to dirty movies. By the early 1980's black owned nightclubs were folding, unable to compete with up scale sound systems and service available at white discos. The blue comedians had run out of places to perform.

BLOWFLY was a Black thing white folks just did not understand. But they didn't have to. Most had never heard of RUDY RAY MOORE or BLOWFLY. Some white artists had done dirty and even racist records. DAVID ALLEN COE has done country songs about hard core sex with

hard core lyrics, and JOHNNY REB the viciously racist singer for the Ku Klux Klan is available still in red neck towns in the south (including ones in Florida). Maynard Jackson, running for Mayor in Atlanta received national press when he visited a bar that had a juke box with Reb songs on it, even though those songs are at least 25 years old. (The Klan has long bragged that the singer is actually a big name country singer presently serving time for a bar room brawl, who knows how true these allegations are.) But while culture has no nurturing ground for such comedy or bad taste (look at all the trouble ANDREW DICE CLAY is having - check out Joe Bob Briggs for more on his problems - did you hear his studio has decided not to release Clays' live, in-concert film?) so these forays into blue did not have the impact that the black performers had on black culture.

2LIVE CREW came along with an updating of the Blowfly formula. Luther Campbell used the close knit community feel of Black America to spread word of his music. This is difficult for whites to understand, as there are occasional small sub-cultures within white society at large but there really isn't the network that the Black community has developed to exist outside of white culture.

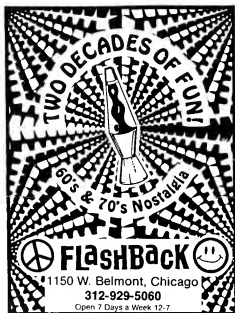
Think about how successful rap music has been in spreading through the black community - a music form that when it began was hated by Black radio, had no advertising muscle and was kicking around in one form or another for over eight years before the powers that be decided that maybe it wasn't a fad!

But the America of today is not the America of twenty, fifteen or even eight years ago. Today, in more schools and jobs, whites and blacks come into contact with each other. And music targeted for an all black audience crosses over in ways BLOWFLY never could. Friends play it for each other. As Campbell points out in the film BANNED IN THE USA, rap music is the only music form that attracts an almost equal number of whites and blacks. Many whites who claim to not like rap music watch rap videos when no one is around and the ratings rap gets on MTV bear this out. Suddenly a form of entertainment which had gone unmolested by the government while it was in the black community, came under attack when whites showed an interest. In this sense the bust was racially motivated - Because the Florida prosecutors did not understand the long history and love affair that the black work-

ing class community has had with blue humor. The larger, bigger issue however has to do with a trend within liberal and left wing America.

Tipper and Albert Gore are liberals. The prosecutor in Florida was a former civil rights attorney and is a feminist in the Andrea Dworkin sense of the word. The Judge who issued the first declaration that the group was probably obscene was black! Where is the ACLU? Well, right now they are fighting for housing for the homeless and in ACLU chapters all over the country are trying to get colleges to ban free speech on campus that is "racist or sexist". What do these issues have in common with the First Amendment? Nothing. Nothing at all.

It wasn't too long ago that if you said you were a liberal that meant you were against government intruding into people's personal lives and their pursuit of pleasure. (A pursuit guaranteed us in the Constitution. Which gives you a clue as to the Party Animals our founding fathers were.) It meant you believed in free markets and free speech. It also implied that you knew any new law was actually the imposing of force on the populace, every law must have a gun or threat of the state to back it up.



Since the government has a monopoly on violence and strength, passing laws was not a cure all and should only occur when no other option existed.

How times change.

The times began changing with the integration issue. In many states in the South to even discuss integration was a capital offense punishable by death. Do you know why the Supreme Court ruled that the death sentence was not an infraction of the Constitution or Bill of Rights? Because the Constitution did not say that States could not stop free speech, only Congress! That loop hole is what allowed segregation to exist. In the nineteen teens and twenties the Industrial Workers of the World union would go into logging towns out west and try to organize workers, only to be arrested because these towns would have "no union soliciting" laws on the books. The courts ruled these legal. So it wasn't just used against Blacks.

In the early 1980's, watching dogs being turned on peaceful protesters was enough to make many liberals feel the government should intrude and stop the brutality and inequity. It is important to remember this. No one started trying to make free speech a lesser priority - they started out of a sense of despair over these people being oppressed by the law. Intentions don't get much better than that.

Slowly groups like the ACLU, caught up in the spirit of the times, began to change their focus. The ACLU had battled tirelessly throughout the 1950's to give employers the right to hire and fire employees without government intervention. That issue was lost in quotas and affirmative action. It is about to be done away with if ACLU statements about "every American deserving housing and a job or comparable income," as Glasser promotes in his book LIBERTY AT WORK, are made into law. The Constitution has nothing to do with any of that. If the ACLU has it's way - our government will.

Lyndon Johnson popularized the view that the government could, by planning, usher in a new society. By planning they mean laws. So increasingly more personal and state power was eroded away in an effort to force a new morality on society at large. Warning signs that the left had abandoned free speech began to appear. It wasn't that long ago that militant feminists would go into drugstores and rip apart copies of Playboy. A left wing poet in charge of a calendar page for a Chicago alternative newspaper told a poet that her poems were not progressive and were

even reactionary - so she could never write up her events. To the left, this is not censorship. A rock critic in town actually called a club I was to do a show at and told them that he would never write up anything I was involved in because I was pro-capitalism. This is not considered black listing by liberals. Comedy groups in town do not allow jokes from the right aimed at the left. (A director at Second City told me there was no way a comedian could be hired there that would insist on kidding the left as well as the right. This is not considered being biased.)

We have become so used to the Government doing things for us that if we see a pick pocket on the train we wait for the police to act - and we usually don't get involved. That is no longer our job. We have turned over so many choices to the state that many liberals argue we should be glad we aren't burdened with the choices anymore!

Violence against gays - pass a law. Job firings - pass a law. Spend millions telling people that drinking while pregnant might not be a good thing. Pass laws against porno and end rape. Ban rock music that is sexist and end sexism. And if you don't like it we'll send in the police.

Some people want to censor art - some RAMBO, some PLAYBOY, some rap. All of them have decided free speech is a lower priority than "the big issues." The ACLU will fight for your right to hold rallies forced on people at shopping malls and scream that is constitutional. It is not. Government cannot interfere with your right to assembly and win over crowds to your beliefs, but nowhere does the First Amendment say that you have the right to disrupt people that have no interest in what your saying and "take over and disrupt" shoppers and airline customers.

The point is, the ACLU, which once made the First Amendment it's only issue, is now

so involved in various left wing causes that it has lost sight of what matters. It isn't all the ACLU's fault. The last big true free speech issue it was involved in was the Nazi march in one of Chicago's predominantly Jewish communities, Skokie. The ACLU has bought mailing lists almost exclusively from left wing publications without realizing that these people bring their own agendas with them. The ACLU lost almost 25% of their membership as a result of the Nazi march, and have since gone out of their way to appeal to their largely liberal backers. The result is that they are involved in abortion rights issues, homeless issues, pay for housework and other favorite liberal causes. Increasingly it is at the expense of the one issue they should be involved with - namely freedom of speech.

Your free speech is not guaranteed at your job, or school or even community. Why? The founding fathers meant to leave you alone - for society to develop the way it wanted to. The founding fathers knew a law was an intrusion on your every day affairs, and although they did include property rights in the Constitution they did not say everyone deserved to own property and should get it through the government.

Every generation has the right to decide how far it's rights extend. Every generation has to fight for its own freedom. But we are the first generation that has grown so accustomed to having the government make our choices and give us guarantees that we don't know how to respond to the loss of personal freedom. And the only group in America that defended the First Amendment has left us to battle on our own. We need them back.

So how can I help 2 LIVE CREW? Well, I have the video and the album. Hopefully the money will help them. Eventually artists themselves will have to decide whether or not to play in Florida, and I would imagine creative and independent people will move to states that allow freedom. Those states that don't allow freedom will gradually watch the life blood of their community, the young, the creative, the upwardly mobile, leave. I don't know if that will keep Luther Campbell from going to prison, but without a First Amendment watchdog like the ACLU, what else can we do?

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ELVIS, ELVIS, ELVIS & ME!



By Randi Tiger

I was privileged to witness the First Annual Convention Of The EP Impersonators International Association gracing the Chicagoland area (that's EPIIA for short. The initials EP are used in place of the King's god-given name to avoid royalty payments to the Graceland estate).

When I arrived at the Sheraton O'Hare, I couldn't believe the sea of sideburns that surrounded me. I done had arrived! This must be the place! All around me were sequin-spangled polyester-jump-suited men, sporting mutton chops and beer guts, wearing lovely Elvisesque gold-tone framed sunglasses with plastic lenses. I felt like I was in a drug-induced Gracelandian state.

It seemed to me that most of the Elvises (or should I say Elvi?) went for that period known as the "Aloha" period. The one I like to call the "Fat Elvis Does Hawaii" period. Whether this was dictated by their natural physical appearance, or if they were "Method Elvi," I was never too sure. Could they be intentionally gaining the fried banana weight and alcohol bloat just to feel more in character?

There were the usual convention offerings: guest speakers such as Charlie Hodge, whose claim to Elvis fame was that he not only played rhythm guitar on stage with the King but also brought him water and scarves. There were "How To" seminars on becoming an Elvis impersonator which also covered "acquiring stage presence" (!?), finding and keeping a band, and other important and mundane information. Every convention has its obligatory

stroke fest and EPIIA was no exception. The Hall Of Fame Awards ceremony was held and the only requirement seemed to be years of service to the memory of the King. The top slots went to three impersonators who had been servicing the King since before he was one.

I was skeptical when I saw the word "International" in the Association's title, but there were Elvi from Australia, Canada, Italy, Switzerland and England (including the female Elvis, Janice Waite) and the main stage had 28 different Kings performing each day. With the same back-up band, with almost conveyor-type ease, Elvi after Elvi came up to sing such classics as "Blue Suede Shoes," "Heartbreak Hotel," etc. etc.

As I interviewed many of the Kings in attendance I found that more than one listed truck driver as his day job. Just like the real King did in the beginning. Is this just a sick coincidence or are they really trying to model their lives after Elvis? The Truck Driving Elvi insist the they perform quite often in the cities of their destination, and that the time on the road allows them time to practice. Whether they will go so far as to practice falling off the toilet as they enter their early 40's remains to be seen. That could lead to these guys becoming an endangered species.

There were also the Elvi with Managers, full time impersonators whose "people" passed out bios to anyone who would take them. One woman handed me a bio on her client's early years. Because he naturally resembled Elvis from an early age, his

family and friends called him "Little Elvis." Now that was also Elvis' slang for his penis. Was this a cryptic way of calling this poor kid a dick, causing him to slip into a life-long Elvis delirium? Is this the type of covert child abuse that makes a kid lead a life of Elvis?

There was one real life Little Elvis in attendance with his mom (a good thing since he was only 7 and here from Brooklyn). She told me that his Elvisism started at age 3. And she made it clear that he made his own career decision. At 3. Sure, sure. She and her little Elvis travel all over the east coast during the summer at fairs and carnivals. Never nightclubs - the shows are past his bedtime. I suddenly flashed in my mind the image of a little kid forced to sit in the corner of his house wearing an Elvis mask, until he could recite all the dialogue to BLUE HAWAII. She told me he was one of the lucky few to perform both days on the main stage. I still felt ill-at-ease.

Those Elvi that arrived the last minute weren't lucky enough to make it to the big stage, so they became stand-by Elvi. Slipping into their Elvi modes out in the lobby, they proved to be far more entertaining than the official impersonators on the main stage. There was one stand-by that looked remarkably like Jamie Farr of MASH and GONG SHOW fame. The stand-by Elvi performed by a "You Sing The Hits" booth manned by one impersonator's mom and dad. At this booth the stand-by Elvi could keep their pelvi loose and their lip curls flexed in hopes that an official Elvi would fall ill or o.d. and they would get a chance

at the big time. That also explained the jump-suit clad Elvis dolls strewn behind the booth with needles stuck in them. Some people will do anything to get into show biz!

I saw women standing around the stage and was immediately confused. Were they groupies of Elvis or of the impersonators? Do they realize Elvis IS dead? Or are they merely impersonating groupies? I decided I didn't want to know. During one singer's act I was lucky enough to be standing in front of the stage when suddenly this one Elvis draped a lovely light blue poly-satin scarf with frayed edges and his stage name, "Joe Elvis" stamped in ink across it, across my shoulders. Then he planted a big wet one right on my lips. It was the highlight of my entire Elvis experience.

I was starting to lose touch with reality. And speaking of that, there were also plenty of Elvis look-a-like male groupies, too. Most of them looked like a cross between Wayne Newton and Wolfman Jack. With a little of Lemmy from MOTORHEAD thrown in for good measure. Most of these felt close to Elvis in a Spiritual way. Most had, at some point in their lives, a mystical experience with the King. They were also at

Elvis A. Presley Aug 15 '77
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the convention to make sure his memory was kept alive. One particular Lemmy Wolfwayne got very agitated as he spoke to me about the press who were there to

mock the King in all his heavenly glory. He began to tell me how he would deal with the infidels as I began to make my escape.

In literature I picked up at the convention, the EPIA bills itself as a "non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation and continuation of the style and music of Elvis Presley." They claim to have developed the guidelines and standards by which all good impersonators impersonate to. That raised some interesting questions. What did the impersonators do before this group came along? Did they slip into other characters until the group came around with strict guidelines to adhere to? Were there rowdy Elvi, ruffians, dopers and hoodlums prowling the streets with cars to give away? And if Elvis were still alive could he live up to the standards set by the EPIA? I decided I was starting to ask too many questions and that I had been in a Graceland state of mind too long. But long live the Spirit of Elvis, else all these illustrious careers might slip down the toilet - just like the real King!

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SOUNDGARDEN:

Interview with Kim Thayil By Mike Flores

One of the bands I enjoy right now is Soundgarden. Cynthia Plastercaster has said that Guns 'n' Roses do nothing for her, but Soundgarden is a band she'd like to add to her collection. When they came to play at the Riviera we went to check the band out. This is great, hard driving rock with none of the mysticism that surrounds most of the music of this type. The band put on a terrific live performance and afterwards I spoke with Soundgarden's phenomenal lead guitarist Kim Thayil.

IOAM: So I understand that you're originally from Chicago...

KIM: Yeah, I am.

IOAM: Did you play in any Chicago bands while you were here?

KIM: (laughter) Yeah, but nothing you'd recognize — a bunch of garage bands.

MIKE: Did you play in any of the clubs here?

KIM: Not really. I was pretty young back then.

IOAM: How did you hook up with the SUB POP label for your early material?

KIM: I had introduced two of the guys, Jonathan and Bruce. Bruce had established the name SUB POP in the late 70's and early 80's. It was well established before Soundgarden came on the scene. The two came together over our project and stayed together, so our first record created, for them, the label as it is now.

IOAM: Were you playing this kind of music in Chicago?

KIM: I was a kid in Chicago, playing mostly punk rock, which was all over Chicago at the time. It was the music scene. I was heavy into Richard Hell and the Voidoids. I liked the MC5 and the Ramones. I was into DEVO and I also liked Black Flag. Those were my influences. I've been trying to find Mark Mothersbaugh's books but they are pretty

hard to find. I hope they keep them in print so I can get them. He is far more talented than people suspect.

IOAM: I saw your new bass player,

KIM: It's difficult. In two weeks the touring will end and we'll have to. We have three or four songs that are worked out. After this tour ends we'll have time. Mike, this was the third U.S. tour off "Louder Than Love" for A&M. There was one European tour as well.

The response off this album has been definitely great. The sales and press were great.

IOAM: When I first got the SUB POP material I was blown away. The A&M release seemed to go a step further.

KIM: I like the SUB POP material a lot.

IOAM: The SST stuff was great too.

KIM: The SST album was recorded a year after the SUB POP material.

IOAM: Do you plan on doing more video tape releases? I enjoyed the tape A&M put out on the record.

KIM: Not on "Louder Than Love." I'd like us to do something like that again, though,

on the next one.

IOAM: Your guitar solos create a layered, almost mathematical approach to the song. It isn't so much a repeated riff as it is an environment of sound.



CHRIS CORNELL

KIM THAYIL

MATT CAMERON

JASON EVULMEN

Ben Sheppard, and thought he did a fine job. Was the Riviera concert his first show with you?

KIM: No. Actually he played a gig with us in Finland his first time.

IOAM: Can you do new material on the road — work up a new album?

KIM: There's the major riff, the head of the song, and then we arrange it dynamically. Melodies and rhythms get added on within the song, so we try to make it more than one riff. We aren't like Rush. We try to be spontaneous. We did "Hands All Over" as a one hour jam and it all came together, for example.

IOAM: Wow!

KIM: We did the song in our elic!

IOAM: After three U.S. tours on one album, I have to ask this - are you guys sick of each other yet?

KIM: No. We get along just fine. The four of us get along great. We go way out of our way to tolerate each individual and to respect them. I don't think we've ever had an argument that lasts more than a day. So we don't have the problem of grudges being held over long periods of time.

IOAM: That's probably what does in most bands. Sounds like you guys approach it almost like a marriage.

KIM: All of us have had successful relationships with our girlfriends and close friends. It's a discipline which can be transferred over to a band.

IOAM: That sounds pretty healthy. The word discipline hadn't crossed my mind when I thought of Soundgarden, but, OK.

KIM: (laughter) You have to keep yourself from getting too big headed and avoid making demands on your friends and band members, especially demands they can't meet. That doesn't come from the label or management, it's something you learn. You have to learn to hold yourself back -

IOAM: To keep from burning your bridges.

KIM: Right, right. Mike, do you remember a band called Identity Crisis?

IOAM: (surprised) WHAT?!!

KIM: -or EPICYLE. On Circle Records?

IOAM: EPICYCLE?!!

KIM: We did a record for Circle Records, Mike.

IOAM: Oh my god! I was managing them then. As a result of some kind folks at WAX TRAX I was able to get them in Arthur Penn's *FOUR FRIENDS!* For reasons unknown to me they later bad mouthed WAX TRAX. I don't know why.

KIM: The imports and us were the only other records on the label. Mike, you didn't remember me, did you?

IOAM: Oh, god damn. You didn't have a beard when you were, what, 16?

KIM: We were from Park Forest. I played guitar. I wrote two songs. For a while, at the end, Bruce Pavick managed Epicyle.

IOAM: They got heavy into Scientology and I went on to collaborate on a satire of it called *the Church of the SubGenius*.

KIM: (laughter) I can't believe you've been following us so long and didn't recognize me!

IOAM: I wanted Epicyle to move west and tour, they wanted to stay here. In those days being big in Chicago meant heading west.

KIM: I know what you mean. I ended up in Seattle. But doing that 45 made me decide that this is what I wanted to do. What happened to the other members of Epicyle.

IOAM: I haven't seen them in years.

KIM: I don't think even record collectors know about how we're all connected with that Identity Crisis EP. My picture is on the back (laughs). That was a big deal for me, Mike, even if you've forgotten!

Hey, send some copies of your mag to me.

IOAM: Wow. Great. Will do!

Opposite: (L-R) Chris Cornell, Kim Thayil, Matt Cameron, Jason Everman. Photo by Michael Lavine courtesy ASM Records.

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UNLEASHED IMAGINATION: Sante Sangre & Opera

By Bryan Wendorf

Fans of the European style of imaginative cinema got a double treat here in Chicago this summer. Alejandro Jodorowsky's long awaited *SANTE SANGRE* played a series of midnight showings at The Music Box Theater and Dario Argento's *OPERA* made it's Chicago debut at the Film Center of the Art Institute as part of it's European directors series.

The release of Jodorowsky's *EL TOPO* in 1971 was a landmark moment in film history. *EL TOPO* not only established new concepts of narrative filmmaking and what a film could do, it also established a new way of marketing films, giving birth to the Midnight Movie. So it was appropriate to see *SANTE SANGRE* at a midnight showing. His last film was a sequel to *EL TOPO* called *THE HOLY MOUNTAIN* made in 1973, 17 years ago. In the time between there have been several aborted projects. *THE FANTASTIC FOUR* movie was one such project, and at one point he was to direct *THE DUNE* movie. For *DUNE* he wanted Salvatore Dali to play the Emperor, and while those projects did not develop with him he apparently learned much about modern filmmaking as a result and emerges in *SANTE SANGRE* as a stronger director. He is completely successful in presenting his unique vision to a larger audience.

Jodorowsky also had help from his producers, Claudio Argento (brother of Dario and often his producer as well) and Reni Cardona, Sr., director of the camp classic *NIGHT OF THE BLOODY APES*.

Filmed on location in Mexico, *SANTE SANGRE* comes across as a delicious mix

of Hitchcock, Bunuel and Todd Browning (*FREAKS* is an obvious reference point). The director's sons Axel and Adan portray Fenix as a boy and a man. The first third of the film is an extended flashback showing him as a young circus performer, the son of Orgo the Knife Thrower (Guy Stockwell) and Concha (Bianca Guerra), a beautiful but obsessive religious fanatic. The film opens at a rapid pace showing Orgo's lust for the tattooed woman and the destruction of the church founded by Concha where people gather to worship a young girl who lost both her arms defending herself from a brutal rape. Concha returns to the circus to discover Orgo in bed with the tattooed woman and pours acid on them both — which angers Orgo who cuts off her arms and leaves her like her saint. Fenix witnesses all this and grows to manhood in a mental hospital where he remains in a catatonic state until his mother appears to claim him. I'm going to avoid any further description of what happens in this film for two reasons: reviews that summarize the entire plot of a film destroy the film for those

that search them out, and so much happens in this film that even a detailed summary would force me to simplify scenes to the point that it would be meaningless. There is more going in *SANTE SANGRE* than any film I've seen in recent memory. Combining humor, horror, surreal fantasy, there are multi-layered images that I have no idea how to express in words. Jodorowsky's current plans are for a sequel to *EL TOPO*, with the producers looking to Japan for the money. *SANTE SANGRE* has garnered great critical acclaim at Cannes and elsewhere, but Hollywood has not stepped forward to utilize his unrestrained imagination.

It was with some apprehension that I attended a screening of Dario Argento's rarely seen 1988 film *OPERA* at the Film Center of the Art Institute. Since discovering his films a few years back (thanks to the editor of *IOAM* who showed me the uncut versions of Dario films from Japanese laser discs), I have become a rabid Argentiophile, but after reading some lukewarm reviews from a handful of critics, including Louis



Dario Argento on the set of *OPERA* (1987)



Cristina Marsillach stars as Betty, the diva victimized by an obsessive fan in Dario Argento's *OPERA* (1987)

Paul (see IOAM #1 for Paul's in-depth look at Argento's classic *SUSPIRIA*), I approached *OPERA* expecting to be disappointed. I'm happy to say that I was not disappointed by *OPERA* at all, in fact I think it has to be one of Argento's best films.

OPERA features a more linear plot than many of Argento's earlier works. There is still plenty of hallucinatory violence which has become his trademark. The setting of *OPERA* is an avant-garde production of Verdi's cursed opera *MACBETH* under the direction of an American horror film director. This character is something of a doppelgänger for Argento himself. In one scene the director is accused of being a sadist himself, a charge he denies. In

another scene the director also states that "You shouldn't base your view of reality on a film." Horror quickly intrudes on the film characters' reality beginning with the injury of the Diva on opening night. The under-study steps into the role to rave reviews and the attention of one obsessive fan. A fan who goes to gruesome extremes to get her attention.

The main visual theme of *OPERA* is voyeurism, a topic which has appeared in many of Argento's past works. *OPERA* is filled with close-ups and shots which put the audience into a voyeuristic role as victim and killer. The most extreme example is when the killer subdues and binds Betty, forcing her, by taping sharp needles under

her eyes, to witness the deaths of several of her closest friends. In these scenes the audience watches from her eyes, actually peering through the needles that make it impossible to look away from the gory deaths. Not that the viewer would want to — Argento's camera work and style elevate these sequences to a bizarre art style. That the subject matter is bizarre makes it no less a work of art (Hitchcock certainly utilized this theme in many films). For example, in one murder we have the point of view of the bullet as it passes through a peep-hole into the eye of a woman peering through it. To follow the course of the bullet until it hits the phone next to Betty.

A distinctive Argento trademark is his use of sound and music. In *OPERA* there are three distinct musical scores which set different moods throughout the film. First we have the opera itself which is performed in various sequences. Brian Eno, in collaboration with Daniel Landis, provides the quiet, ambient soundtrack which erupts into blaring heavy metal whenever the killer strikes.

The film itself is littered with references to Argento's past works — from *SUSPIRIA*'s rain storm to *PHENOMENA* in which the director is shown controlling an insect on a wire. If you have seen Michael Soavi's excellent Argento documentary "Dario Argento and His World of Horror," you'll know that was precisely the method used by Argento while filming *PHENOMENA*, which was butchered by New Line Cinema of over 40 minutes and released in the states under the title *CRUEPERS*. Speaking of Soavi, on another level of self-reference, one of the police detectives assigned to protect Betty is a Detective Soavi.

OPERA was a truly satisfying experience, and it was a pleasant change of pace to see an uncensored big-screen Argento movie in the U.S. Thanks to The Film Center for this rare opportunity. Maybe next we'll be able to see Argento's collaboration with George Romero, *TWO EVIL EYES* or the Argento-produced, Soavi-directed *THE CHURCH*.

Both *SANTE SANGRE* and *OPERA* have received limited theatrical releases in this country and no video releases have been planned.

HONG KONG FILM ERUPTS!

By Michael Flores

I had initiated myself to video searching in ethnic neighborhoods when I began my quest for Japanese tapes to study the animation coming from there. I had learned how to deal with people astonished to see a foreigner, or did not understand that I really did want to see a film or cartoon, even if it wasn't in English. Eventually I would move on to Vietnamese video stores, exhausting their supplies of material that I was interested in and moving on. Boom Boom and I moved to the Pilsen area on Chicago's south side and finally got around to walking around Chinatown in search of good food and video.

You enter Chinatown off Cermak road (Cermak was the Mayor who took a bullet meant for Franklin Roosevelt and also tried to start the first nude beach on Lake Michigan in the 1930's) on Wentworth, travelling under an arch that beckons you to Chinatown. That arch is attached to the ornate On Leong building which is now owned by the IRS since being busted for gambling. For decades, tourists and those in search of the perfect Chinese meal have walked by Chicago Policemen who stood guarding the most elaborate betting casinos the Chinese community loved to visit. The Gambling Lords hired teen gang members as their "collectors" which alienated the store owners after a while. As the kids got into restaurant extortion the favor that many held towards the gambling house began to wither.

There is a great Chinese restaurant with the kind of food we are use to in the west called Moon Palace in the building next to the On Leong building, you walk upstairs

and the food is terrific. You walk down Wentworth and see the pretty Hong Kong girls, maybe the prettiest on earth, that mix of European, Asian and whatever else — the black hair and words that flow up and down. Every word seems important. Every word carries an urgency and emotion, sometimes leaving you hanging in the air — I think that is so the other person can finish or comment on the statement.

Walking down the street I pass the small gift shops and stores — there is one fish shop that has the fish swimming in tanks built into the wall of the front of the store —



you can't get fresher fish than this. They'll even take the fish out of the water and fillet them as you watch. Ducks hang from the window of one store and body parts to animals I can only guess at hang on the hooks next to the ducks. Walk into the back of the store and the shelves are filled with exotic herbs, cures and placebos. Magical objects like a sea horse skeleton to increase potency, or dried bulls balls, I don't know what they're supposed to do.

And tea. My god! There is a tea store that has varieties of tea ranging in price from a

couple of bucks to several hundred dollars — an ounce! No I have no idea what the tea tastes like and my attempts at conversation with the girls that work there was hampered by the fact that they only seem to speak 15 words of English. There is a new complex of buildings as I approach my favorite Chinese seafood restaurant, 65. The owner calls it 65 because he claims one day to open 65 of them, he was also nicknamed 65 as a kid — I use to know a director named 11, but most people I knew said his name should have been 6 or 7. Anyway, most of us aren't used to Chinese menus

that emphasize seafood so going there is always a treat and adventure.

As I'm walking down towards the end of Chinatown (I should tell you there is free parking in a huge lot before you get to the arch) towards my salt and pepper shrimp (yeah I know, it sounds boring — it isn't even on the menu — they leave the heads on which grosses out Boom Boom, BUT it is the best shrimp I've ever had and if you've ever eaten crawfish the heads should pose no trouble), when I came upon a robot clown

moving from side to side and waving it's arm — an almost full size robot clown. The store it promotes is BANG BANG VIDEO. I entered and discovered that they kept up with Hong Kong films far more than any other store I had been in. Photos of the Hong Kong stars, autographed, hang from the ceiling. I quickly noticed these were real autographs, not printed posters as I had seen elsewhere. I discovered that they were getting the videos in within days of their Hong Kong video release. And most of the movies are sub-titled in English.



I was hunting down Hong Kong films because I believe their adventure films are not only the most violent, not only the most, at times, insanely concocted and derivative (in ways that don't seem derivative because they are so off the wall) but also because I believe them to be the best adventure films being made on the planet. The trouble with American or British stunt work is that, too often, insurance company demands prevent film companies from using their stars in action scenes. We have grown so used to seeing the back of the stars head in action films so it's a shock to see JACKIE CHAN take a full blow in the face and continue to act - without the camera flinching. Hong Kong sensibilities can at times bring great respect for those that risk their lives - in ways we can't begin to understand. Men who work building the giant skyscrapers refuse to wear harnesses or any kind of protective gear, for example. Hong Kong has the highest death rate in the industrial world in building construction, yet companies are forced by law to have all the safety equipment at the site, where it usually sits as the men climb to the sky.

Hong Kong waits - watching for the day when the Red Chinese come over and begin a slaughter that will repulse the world. Western countries continue to tell Hong Kong to compromise on it's freedom - to meet the Reds half way. The people of Hong Kong keep repeating they would rather have liberty or death. Almost 80% of Hong Kong's citizens marched in protest of the mass murder of students in Mainland China - led by Hong Kong's biggest film stars who leant their status and fame to a cause that is beleaguered at best. No support from Washington, no defense from England. Alone. And they still believe in freedom. No country is offering them a home in their country, they have nowhere to turn. Except that they build buildings without harnesses, and rate fear as a low priority.

At least, lower than freedom.

There is a film series I adore called IN THE LINE OF DUTY, every year a new story comes out in which I can always be guaranteed some exciting kung fu, a tough two-fisted

fighting female (at least one) and terrific stunt work. Each film in the series tries to outdo the last. But the latest, which was a huge hit, lacked the humor of the previous outings of my favorite Hong Kong police force, and left me sad.

It is too bad that conservatives and intelligence groups often overlook foreign entertainment as a window into the feelings of the culture. Especially a hit film. Sutsuke Tsurumi, a contemporary philosopher who lives in Kyoto, Japan has long argued that pop culture, from newspapers to comic books and rock bands, reflects the aspirations and true histories of people and nations. Who listens to philosophers in this day and age? (If you do I would strongly urge you pick up A CULTURAL HISTORY OF POSTWAR JAPAN, ISBN #0-7103-0259-2 published by KPI Books). If you will bear with me I'll tell you about this film and why I think it was such a huge hit in Hong Kong.

First off, realize that this series functioned up until now as a comedy - that this film breaks from the series in its overall tone and reflects the present apprehension of Hong Kong's community. At the beginning of IN THE LINE OF DUTY Americans are killing off Chinese citizens for reasons unknown to the Hong Kong police force. Our female hero starts to investigate - but the police are being told by their superiors to let the murders go - or else. Coming into possession of tape from one of the suspected killers. Our heroine and her partner suddenly find themselves being pursued by their fellow Hong Kong police officers for the tape-a pursuit that is thwarted when a sympathetic policeman, confused by his orders to kill them and retrieve the tape, lets them go instead.

There is plenty of exciting action that you'll have to see - all the kung fu is top



Opposite Page: Chicago's Chinatown - view includes the pagoda entry, the ornate On Leong building is pictured on the left. Above: Bang Bang Video, a great source of Hong Kong movies! Right: Tea shop with an incredible array of exotic teas. All photos by Michael Flores

notch. The tape is played and it is discovered that the U.S. is selling drugs to buy weapons for the Contras in South America. The people are being killed because they know. I won't give away too much of the film, but the image of one cops mom standing over a dead CIA agents body, screaming in anger and crying in disbelief at the body draped in the American flag, is an image I will carry with me for some time to come.

I suggest you rent all the IN THE LINE OF DUTY films and work your way up to the latest one. They are available through Rainbow out of San Francisco. Next issue I'll highlight another unique Hong Kong film. If you have a Chinese neighborhood near you I suggest you check out their video sections. Most Rainbow videos are sub-titled, and if you haven't seen any kung fu films since the 1970's I think you'll be pleased to see how they have been integrated into cop films, thrillers, etc. Anything with Sammo Hung and Jackie Chan from the 1980's is worth seeing. Be seeing you!

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" B "

THEATER!

By Pam "Boom Boom" Smith

One thing about Chicago — we have great theater! Not just the "good" stuff, i.e., the Steppenwolf Theater's "Grapes of Wrath," Sam Sheppard stuff, big Broadway shows that finally make it here after years of playing London and New York ("Phantom," etc.). Chicago has its own unique brand of stage shows probably due, in part, to the fact that many small theater companies can thrive because they can get away without paying Equity wages, rent is cheaper than New York or L.A. and they are able to generate a large amount of audience support by doing something different than their competitors. Believe me, the competition is steep — during any given week there is a huge array of different shows to see — definitely something for everyone! Especially "psychotronic" aficionados!

I recently had the opportunity to see a few shows which I would refer to as "B" plays — Metraform, Inc./Annoyance Theater's "Coed Prison Sluts," and "That Damed Anti-Christ" and Edge Productions' "Vampire Lesbians of Sodom."

"Vampire Lesbians of Sodom" and "Sleeping Beauty or Coma" are the classic double bill of plays by Charles Busch. The show was one of New York's longest running comedies and has since become the longest running show at the Ruggles Cabaret in the Royal George Theater.

"Vampire Lesbians of Sodom" follows the story of two time-travelling lesbian vampires (of course!), beginning in Sodom and Gomorrah. A virgin (Alexandra Billings) is sacrificed to the Succubus (a hard-boiled dame of a monster played by Marguerite Hammersley). Next we are transported to a mansion in Hollywood of the 20s, where the vampire Succubus is now La-Condessa, a silent screen vamp. Her rival is none other than the virgin now reincar-

nated as Madeleine Astarie, a legendary stage actress who has come to Hollywood to star in the movies. Eventually they are unmasked as vampires and the two are forced to flee Hollywood, landing in 1990's Las Vegas where The Virgin/Madeleine Astarie is now appearing as a Joan Crawford-esque headliner.

The show is a blast and the cast is definitely adds to the fun (Alexandra Billings and Marguerite Hammersley are great!). I'm really happy that director/producer Douglas Hartzell was able to bring this show to Chicago. I first met Doug Hartzell when he and Edge Productions were involved in "Splatter Theater II" (another great show that I reviewed a while back in the fanzine format IOAM). Although "Vampire Lesbians" run keeps getting extended, I look forward to whatever Doug Hartzell and Edge Productions comes up with next. Call Ruggles Cabaret, 1641 N. Halsted (988-9000) for more information.

Metraform, Inc. is another bunch of people who have consistently been putting

on funny, totally out of the ordinary shows. Mick Napier, the director at Annoyance Theater and one of the main people behind Metraform was someone I first came into contact with through "Splatter Theater" and "Splatter Theater II." These shows took what could have been good as just a simple parody of the obvious cliches of splatter films and turned out an incredible blood-drenched, travelling carnival of horrors, a gut-blowout (literally) of a musical comedy! Now in a permanent home at the Annoyance Theater on Broadway they have not one, not two — but FIVE shows that run during the course of a week.

"Coed Prison Sluts," is a musical about the lustful life of fun loving inmates of a coed prison. An extremely funny show complete with musical numbers (that you'll still be singing days later), dance, a circus clown, drag queens and a hamster. Need I say more?

As if that wasn't enough you can also see (the same night if you wish), "That Damed Antichrist." A light hearted musical directed



Marguerite Hammersley as the Succubus in "Vampire Lesbians of Sodom."



Mick Napier, director/head guy at The Annoyance Theater.
Photo: Michael Flores

Tuesdays (and now, maybe, Wednesdays too due to popular demand — check with the theater) you can see The Real Live Game Show. Yes. An actual game show. You can win prizes, too — audience participation taken as far as it can go.

The Real Live Game Show is followed by what has become a PR milestone for this theater -- "The Real Live BRADY BUNCH!" Like I said, these guys have been written up everywhere since they started this show. Chicago Tribune, Sun-Times, CNNI, and have even had Five Plumb (the girl who played Jan Brady) show up in the audience and get up

on stage, although she wanted to play a role other than Jan. Who can blame her. Anyway, they perform actual scripts from the Brady Bunch, and have included such important details as they way Marcia used to flip her hair and, well, you get the idea. Episodes change every two weeks.

Finally, on a less comedic note, we have "Sex Boy," which I haven't seen yet at press time, but most definitely will as I have yet to be disappointed by any-

thing I've seen at the Annoyance Theater. Directed by Patrick Towne and starring Mick Napier, the play examines the influence of parents, friends and society on a young man's sexuality, and how that sexuality obsesses him and ultimately destroys him. Hmmm...

In the future we can look forward to a production entitled "Manson - The Musical Der Rag a Muffin."

All of Metroform's scripts are developed using improvisation by an extremely talented group of actors who appear in some or all of the shows running at the theater. Something's always happening there so check it out: The Annoyance Theater, 3153 N. Broadway (929-6200).

by Mick Napier with music by Faith Soloway (who are also responsible for "Coed Prison Sluts") that tells the saga of a family led by a formerly promiscuous now lesbian mom whose son is being groomed by a nun and scout master to be the Antichrist. More laughs, more great tunes. What more can I say. See it.

Also of note, in both of the above shows Kahlua, Mick Napier's dog, plays key parts. A fine actor too! In one scene in "Coed Prison Sluts," during a mass-hypnotism sequence, the dog actually pretends to be hypnotized! Kahlua, I should mention, also played to thunderous applause in the role of Sparky in "Splatter Theater."

OK, "Coed Prison Sluts" and "That Darned Antichrist" run on Fridays and Saturdays (make it a double feature), but these guys don't rest during the week. On

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By Bryan Wendorf

- **KAKTUS #1** (\$2 Fantagraphics) - Gary Panyer, Emmy Award winning set designer for "Pee Wee's Playhouse" edits this new children's comic that will appeal to adults as well. This may be the most exciting new title this issue.
- **REAL GIRL #1** (\$2.50 Fantagraphics) - A new comics anthology focusing on sexual relations of all sorts. No attempt to preach a party line -- just honest stories based on the artists' own experience. Contributors include Mary Fleener, Terry LeBan, Eddie Campbell and "Love and Rockets" Mario Hernandez.
- **KINGS IN DISGUISE** (trade paperback, \$14.95 from Kitchen Sink) A collection of the highly acclaimed series about a young boy growing up in the depression.
- **DRAWN AND QUARTERLY #2** - A new comics anthology featuring SPY magazine artist Drew Friedman and also Dennis Worden, Richard Sala and more.
- **COMICS JOURNAL #139** (\$4.95 Fantagraphics) - This issue deserves special note not only for running the first Alan Moore interview in years, but also for an interview with Aline Komisky Crumb (editor of the sadly defunct, will-be-missed WEIRDO) conducted by Peter Bagge (whose comic book HATE, "Boom Boom" really likes).
- **FREAKS: WE WHO ARE NOT LIKE OTHERS** (\$11.99 RE/SEARCH) - The fine folks at RE/SEARCH have dug up another obscure hard-to-find book to reprint. A scholarly look at the world of carnival freaks.



- **THE DRAWINGS OF TEX AVERY** (\$49.95) - French import but most of the text is in English. 12" x 11" with great printing and production values. A fascinating look at the work of a great American artist whose cartoons are now being released on video as well.
- **OLIVIA 1991 CALENDAR** - This woman does some incredible sexy art and this calendar has two BETTY PAGE renditions.
- **LEGEND OF KAMUI: THE ISLAND OF SUGARU-Part 1** (\$16.95 from Viz Comics) - A 262-

page book collecting the first part of Yoshihisa Tagami's historical tale of a fugitive Ninja. Great art in this American translation of a Japanese classic.

- **TWINEARTHS** (\$5.95 RSP) - An 80-page reprint of a 1950's newspaper strip.
- **EMMANUELLE #2** (\$9.95 trade paperback from NBM) - Euido Erepam's comic version of the famous soft core sex heroine. Much sexier than the movies.
- **M #1-4** (\$5.95 each) - The first of a 4-part adaptation of this classic German film that starred Peter Lorre and was directed by Fritz Lang. It comes with a flexi-disc of "In the Hall of the Mountain King" and is illustrated by Jon J. Muth who did the great watercolors for Marcel's DRACULA graphic novel.
- **W.O.W. (WORLD OF WARD) #1** (\$3.95) - Bill Ward worked on BLACKHAWK and CAPTAIN MARVEL in the 1940's Golden Age of Comics, but his best work was TORCHY and other pin-up girl/cheesecake comics printed here.
- **SYNN, GIRL FROM LSD #1** (\$3.95 Americomics) - Ok, let's see, we've got a topless dancer, LSD shock treatments and plenty more in a story described as a "psychedelic Night of the Living

Dead." Sounds too weird to be true, but I'm waiting for it.

- **BIRDLAND #1** (\$1.95 EROS Comics) - A three-issue series of adult comics by Gilbert Hernandez, one of the "LOVE AND ROCKETS" boys.

- **HARVEY KURTZMAN'S STRANGE ADVENTURES #1** (\$19.95 Epic Comics) He brought us MAD magazine, PLAYBOY's "Little Annie Fanny" and much more. Here's a brand new hard cover (!) book of collaborations between Kurtzman and some of today's top artists, including MAD's Sergio Aragones, Rick Geary, and Dave Gibbons. I can't help but give this my highest possible recommendation.

- **GRAPHIC #1** (Fantaco \$3.95) - Another new horror anthology - except this one features Clive Barker illustrations as well!

- **HATE #2** (\$2.00 Fantagraphics) - Peter Bagge's new book focuses on Buddy Bradley who has grown up quickly since the cancellation of NEAT STUFF. Bagge is one of my absolute favorite cartoonists ever.

- **TABOO #4** (\$14.95 trade paperback, Spiderbaby Graphics) - This anthology series just seems to get better and better. Always controversial and thought provok-



ing. The big news in this issue is that the first English translation of "THE EYES OF THE CAT" appears. That was the first collaboration between Heavy Metal artist MOEBIUS and was written by EL TOPO, THE HOLY MOUNTAIN and SANTE SANGRE director JODOROWSKY.

- **THE MANY LIVES OF BATMAN** (\$13.95 trade paperback) - A serious academic study of Batman by two Penn State professors. It's about time!
- **PARADIGMS LOST** (\$10.95 trade paperback) - An overview of currently unsolved problems in

debate within the scientific community written for the intelligent laymen.

- **THE COMPLETE KOLOR KRAZY KAT #1-** (\$34.95 Hardcover from Kitchen Sink) George Herriman's ground-breaking newspaper strip remains one of the greatest contributions to comics art ever. This hardcover volume begins reprinting Herriman's later color work.

- **JIM #4** (\$2.50 Fantagraphics) - After a long absence a new issue of this strange, surreal book.

Check it out. JIM is one of the strangest, most brilliant comics I've ever seen.

- **KING KONG #1-5** (\$2.50 each, Monster Comics) - A new division of Fantagraphics presents an adaptation of the classic big monster movie of all time. A terrific cover by Dave Stevens is also available as a limited edition print.

- **ILLUMINATUS! #1** (\$2.50 Rip Off Press) - Wilson and Shea's hilarious conspiracy novel finally gets the comic book treatment. Recommended for all Discordians, Dillinger fans, Sub Geniuses, acid casualties.

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- **RAT FINK COMICS #1** (\$2.50 World of Fandom) - Ed "Big Daddy" Roth, one of Flores' personal heroes, created the Rat Fink character (usually seen in hot rods or riding a surf board throughout the early 1960's) and now the rev'd up Rodent is back to corrupt another generation.



- **BETTY BOOP'S HOLLYWOOD CHRONICLES** (\$5.95 Trade Paperback) - Original Betty newspaper strips that ran in the 1930's.

- **REAL WAR STORIES #2** (\$4.95 Eclipse Comics) - Edited by Joyce Brabner, this unusual series presents true stories of soldiers and their experiences in the military. Includes stories of open racial discrimination and gays and lesbians within the service. Covers the unpleasant realities of military service.

- **STEED & PEEL #1-3** (\$4.95 each) - Marvel Comics has a comic book out called THE AVENGERS so when it was decided to publish a comic based on the show the name had to be changed. Watch for the TV show on A&E including the Honor Blackman episodes. (She left the show to play Pussy Galore, the lesbian leader of her all-woman squad in GOLDFINGER.)

- **ROBERT CRUMB'S ID #1-3** (\$2.50 each EROS Comix) - Sexually explicit selections from

the FRITZ THE CAT and WEIRDO creator's sketchbooks.

- **BASIL WOLVERTON'S SPACE FUNNIES #1** (\$5.95 Archival Photography) - One of the wildest artists to ever appear in MAD magazine, these are Wolverton's rare and bizarre 1940's SPACE HAWK and SPACE PATROL stories.

- **BABY YOU'RE REALLY SOME-THING** (EROS Comix \$2.50) - Rare erotica and pin up girls by Frank Frazetta.

- **BUZZ #1** (\$2.95 Kitchen Sink) - Kitchen Sink produces some of the best adult comics on the market without necessarily resorting to explicit sex or violence.

- **WARTS AND ALL** (\$14.95 trade paperback from RAW) - A new collection of art by Drew Friedman.

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MUSIC CONFIDENTIAL

By Steve Levin

What happened to party bands like THE LYRES and THE FLESHTONES? Both bands' last albums were pretty weak. Too many lyrics getting in the way of the beat. I'd rather move my hips than my frontal lobe anytime. I still wonder what they are up to, if anyone out there knows drop me a line.

THEE HEADCOATS, THE MONO MEN and GIRL TROUBLE have put out new albums that hit you right in the knee joints. These are three fun party bands. You know ... fun, like when you first heard "Double Shot Of My Baby's Love" by THE SWINGING MEDALLIONS. I'm talking "passing out in her front lawn" fun.

"The Kids Are All Square" on Hangman Records by THEE HEADCOATS is Britain's answer to the aforementioned LYRES and FLESHTONES. Their music is a cross between THE PREMIERS (of FARMER JOHN fame), MUSIC MACHINE and a dash of 1970's punk. I'm talking low fi, dirty production work with "Monkey's Paw" and "Ballad of the Fog Dragon Pinhead" as stand out tracks. Only THEE HEADCOATS appear on the jacket. I know that ex-MILKSHAKE, ex-MIGHTY CEASERS mastermind and front man Billy Childish is responsible for this album and he's the Head Coat. I've seen a picture of this trio and they're pretty squirrely lookin' buzz heed limeys who wear matching deer stalker hats and play vintage guitars. A few of the tracks feature a trio of female vocalists called THE HEADCOATEES, that are a little too B-52ish for my tastes but they aren't on every cut so this lp is still worth having.

THEE HEADCOATS new lp BEACH BUMS MUST DIE is due out soon from Crypt Records (home of the essential BACK FROM THE GRAVE series). Speaking of Crypt Records, Tim Warren, the head of the label, has moved to Hamburg, Germany but Crypt keeps cranking them out.

THE MONO MEN are heavy on the power chords, distortion and teeth grinding guitar solos. They sound like THE STOOGES covering THE SONICS with touches of The Link Man (LINK WRAY to the uninitiated) thrown in. The album,

STOP DRAGGING ME DOWN has made it very tough for me to get to side 2. I keep playing side 1 — it does not leave my turntable. I have to love a band that covers THE RUMBLERS tune "BOSS." Who are THE MONO MEN? I don't know, there are no liner notes, no listing of band members, nothing ... They do thank Jeff Conolly, among other trash rock kings of THEE LYRES, whose nickname may have inspired the name MONO MEN. I asked Pete from BUTT RAG Magazine if he knew anything about them and he said, "I think they are from Washington." That's all we may know. (I'll dig around for more on this band next issue. Hope you can make it to side 2!)

GIRL TROUBLE has a really cool album out on Sub Pop. This is one really trash group in a CRAMPSy, KINGSMEN and RAIDERS vein. They've switched to Dionysus Records for the new mini-lp STOMP SHOUT AND WORK IT ON OUT. It's six tracks of 60's garage band covers including the classic "Take a Look at Me" by MR. LUCKY and THE GAMBLERS, "Out of Our Tree" by Takoma's garage kings THE WAILERS (The Original Tall Cool One's) and a live recording of "Louie Louie" done SONICS-style. The perfect lp to play after THEE HEADCOATS album — they both have similar production style and choice of material. THE MONO MEN lp claims to have been recorded in "2 days and 6 cases." I think all three bands may have used this recording method!

TEX EDWARDS' (see side-bar for a brief chat with this wild-man) new 7" on the poorly distributed Sympathy Records is some more heaping helpings of psychobilly raunch. Put "Lee Harvey Was a Friend of Mine" on at the next Levi-Dockers-golf get-together and you'll never see those docks again. The record is on blood red vinyl too. Mike is trying to get hold of his incredible lp PARDON ME, I HAVE SOMEONE TO KILL and the 45 to sell to readers of IT'S ONLY A MOVIE — let's hope he pulls it off.

Music reviews aside, I had one of the scariest moments in my long rock'n psycho life at a showing of THE EXORCIST 3 at the Chestnut Street Station. I've got lots of

PARDON ME, I'VE GOT SOMEONE TO KILL

I really love Tex Edwards' album PARDON ME, I'VE GOT SOMEONE TO KILL (see IOAM #2, if you have a copy — it sold out within days!) and ever since Steve Levin loaned me a tape of this hard to find record I've been happy to force it on all my friends. Still, we've resolved several complaints that not only have people been unable to find this incredible collection of psychotic country songs, but record store owners look at them funny when they try to explain what the album is. With titles like "LSD Made a Wreck Outta Me," "Psycho," "Girl on Death Row," I can see the record store owners' point. That these are all real country tunes (or at least new versions of the classics) and done with genuine love and respect doesn't help matters. ("No really, these are real songs!") You can order copies of this incredible party album for \$8.98 plus a buck postage. Also we have limited quantities of Tex's 45 on red vinyl, LEE HARVEY WAS A FRIEND OF MINE for \$4.00 plus 50 cents. If you order the album and the 45 the postage for both is a buck.

STEVE LEVIN had a chance to talk to Tex, the Hank Williams of psychotic country music, and we are happy to share it with you.

STEVE: I work at a used record store and found PARDON ME, BUT I'VE GOT SOMEONE TO KILL in the bins there. I was intrigued by the cover, put it on the turntable and discovered it was just what I'd been looking for.

TEX: Oh really?

STEVE: Yeah, how did you wind up on Sympathy records? They usually do trash and hard core punk.

TEX: I was in LA for three or four years, I moved out there and met LONG GONE JOHN who runs the label. He's a good cat so we hit it off right away. I was real happy with the sound on the album.

STEVE: That's one of the best things about it. When I first put the record on the turntable I wondered if it would be all high speed one chord music, but it sounded so authentic it blew me away.

TEX: I think the other groups on the label are authentic with what they do as well, I just do something different.

STEVE: With PARDON ME... almost impossible to find. Now I think it's funny that it will be released through NEW ROSE records in France. This means it will be available here in Chicago at extremely high import prices.

TEX: Really? You must have some extraordinary record stores in Chicago. Believe you me here in Dallas there are no stores that carry imports at all. And they are hard to find in LA as well. Did you hear that THE LEGENDARY STARDUST COWBOY (discovered on THE GONG SHOW) has been released on New Rose? I can't find that record anywhere.

STEVE: I understand you have a touring band called THE LOAFING HYENAS, and that you just finished recording new material with them.

TEX: Had. Unfortunately the bass player passed away right after we finished recording so I don't know what we're going to do now. The original idea was to tour, but now that is all up in the air.

People in Europe really want us to tour so we'll get something together, but at this stage I just don't know.

STEVE: It wouldn't be the first time Europe discovered American talent and sold it back to us. I wish you'd come to Chicago.

TEX: I'd like to. I'll just have to see what happens.

STEVE: So you opened for the SEX PISTOLS when they played Dallas.

TEX: (laughter)

STEVE: What was that like?

TEX: It was a lot of fun. We played and had a good time.

STEVE: Where did you get that incredible jacket on the back cover of the album?

TEX: To be honest, that is not an original 1950's coat. It's new and from Italy. You know, everyone asks me about that! Europe is going through a western kick with a twist right now. I collect 1950's jackets, but when I saw this I couldn't resist. It is great.

STEVE: I was really knocked out by your choice of songs on PARDON ME. How did you find them?

TEX: Some of my friends, MIKE BUCK, RANDY and DONNA REEVES collect the weirdest stuff.

STEVE: Your new 45, LEE HARVEY WAS A FRIEND OF MINE, well, was he?

TEX: No, no. I was just a little kid. I use to have a friend named Joshua who use to go with Lee and shoot. Joshua claims the CIA scrambled his brains and he does live kind of weird. At this point, who knows who did what on the Kennedy thing. Joshua's mind is so gone if he does know anything it can't be used. He is another story in itself.

STEVE: Your album chronicles all kinds of death, murder and revenge. Which is why I love it. Any reason you gravitate towards songs about psychotic behavior?

TEX: Well, that area of music is so wide you really have to acknowledge it. Some people take it very serious and can't joke about the subject matter. It isn't a joking matter, but you do have to deal with it. Humor seems a good way to deal with it as any. The songs are actual songs from different periods in country music. They are all real.

I just got a really good bad review in a rock mag called YOUR FLESH. I really love everything they hate about PARDON ME. They may think the songs are sick, but I don't think they even understood that it is an album of covers of real country music! I'm definitely using the review in my press package.

STEVE: I saw that and laughed! Not only did they not get the music, I don't think they understand country and western.

TEX: I love rock as much as anyone, but I love country and western too. There are some jaded rock critics out there who only listen to one kind of music.

STEVE: Your album is traditional country, they thought you were mocking the entire field. I read the review and laughed all the way through it. And I played the album all the way through again. I love this album!

songs (mostly 50's stuff) about being in a theater and having a monster sit down next to the singer, and, yeah, it happened to me, man. I knew I wasn't gonna like 3 very much anyway (read the book and save \$!) but then it sat next to me. The Wolfman! Yep, WOLFMAN JACK sat down one seat away from me! Maybe in 1959 I would have been nutz to meet him but by the end of EXORCIST 3 I was ready to strangle him.

He sat there all through the film wheezing, gagging and coughing up fur balls. The worst part of it was that the Wolfman found



Tex Edwards
Photo by P.C. Falk

shots of body bags being wheeled out scary. This was the first film I've seen with "Implied" special effects. Someone (usually GEORGE C. SCOTT) picks up a sheet over an unseen corpse then describes to an actor standing on the other side of the sheet what's been done to it. Saving the film company lots of money that could have been spent on something they didn't think they need like ... oh, SPECIAL EFFECTS!

Well Wolfman, hope you get over that cold, and maybe dropping a few pounds would clear up that wheeze. I mean, even the guy that came in with him sat a seat away from him. As for me, where's a silver bullet when you need it?

Steve Levin vs. The Wolfman

Joe Bob Goes to the Drive-In

By Joe Bob Briggs
Drive-In Movie Critic of Grapevine, Texas

Now they're trying to ice the Dice-Man. NBC got huge flack from their local stations because Andrew Dice Clay hosted "Friday Night Videos" to promote his new flick, "The Adventures of Ford Fairlane."

Let me repeat that: "The Adventures of Ford Fairlane."

Let me say it two or three more times, since evidently nobody in the media wants to let this guy promote his movie:

"Ford Fairlane"

"Ford Fairlane"

"The Adventures of Ford Fairlane"

Now, I don't care what the Ice-Man says. I don't care how he says it. I don't care how gross, crude, rude and nasty he is when he says it. Enough Hollywood big-shots have turned their back on him: The man's been blacklisted.

This oughta make you mad.

After he was on "Saturday Night Live" in May, and two performers walked off the show because they couldn't stand to be in the guy's presence, and a lot of people got tickets to the show just so they could heckle the guy, and there was probly more pressure on one person than has ever been applied to a stand-up gig — when there was so much pressure for the guy to be funny that even if he was unfunny for five seconds people were gonna say "Over-rated" and "No Big Deal" and "What a jerk" — even after all that, the Dice-Man scored the biggest ratings of the year, and he did a good job.

In the NBA, that would be like Michael Jordan scoring 40 points in the last quarter to win the game.

All it got the Ice-Man was more grief.

He was supposed to be on the Joan Rivers Show, but her staff walked off and the appearance was canceled. This one was especially weird, because Joan Rivers was the first person to get away with using the word "slut" on TV and talks about the disgusting sex habits of real people. She calls women "cows" and "pigs." And, as far as I know, she's never been considered too hot for network TV. But the Dice-Man can't

come on her show. It's like saying that being a white male has become an actual crime.

The guy's banned for life on Empty-V.

He may have trouble getting movie deals.

What's going on here?

When it was announced that Dice would be doing "Friday Night Videos," station managers all over the country called up the network and said they were promised he wouldn't be on the network again. And apparently they were promised that, at a closed-door meeting in Washington! But they still had one appearance left on Dice's two appearance contract, and so they had to let him go on "Friday Night Videos." But not to worry; he wouldn't be on any network programming in the future.

And do you know why?

Because they got 1,764 viewer complaints.

Let me put this in perspective. The show had an 11.5 rating. That means more than ten million people saw it.

Ten million saw it, and .0001704 percent of them complained.

And so the network made a big pile of money, and the Dice-Man came through under pressure, and you would think that somebody would be sending him a bottle of champagne. Instead, they're telling him to hit the road.

There was a time when Americans got mad about blacklists.

It was that long ago time when regular guys were in charge, and before that the .0001704 percent took over.

Free the Dice-Man.

Go to his movie.

Even if you don't want to see his movie, buy a ticket to his movie. It's the only thing the jerkolas understand.

And speaking of logic from outer space, "Peacemaker" is a space-alien super-cop stunt movie that's the best wheels-and-



triggers action flick since "Action Jackson." And you guys know how much I like "Action Jackson." There's not a single minute of the movie without either a car chase, a fireball, a fistfight, a shootout, an upside-down squad car, a body through a plate-glass window, or a shotgun blast through the gut-bucket.

Remember when John Carpenter made that movie "Stamman", with Jeff Bridges as the weirdbeard alien trying to get home? This is the same movie, only without the sappy philosophy, and with not one, but two stamens attempting to blow holes in each other's brains because one of them is a cop and the other one is a serial killer on another planet — only you don't know which is which. Caught in the middle is Hilary Shepard who can't decide whether to a) run away, b) sleep with one of them, c) help one of them find the other one, or d) tell one of them the other one is trying to find them. And, oh yeah, one more thing — they both have guns the size of a ride at Disneyland.

And, oh yeah, Robert Davi is a human cop trying to figure out why the two outer-space cops are here. You remember Robert Davi? The South American drug dealer in "Licence To Kill"? Vito Genovese in "The Gangster Chronicles"? The guy who looks like he has a switchblade scar on his cheek? Well, this movie is so violent that Robert Davi is the good guy.

Twisted metal jubilee.

Two breasts. Three dead bodies. Four plate-glass window smashings. One alien

ADVICE TO THE HOPELESS

Joe Bob,

There are still a few operating drive-ins here in Baltimore, but we are caught between Yuppies to the south (where they act like they run the country) and yuppies to the north (where they act like they started the country). Please send (im)moral support.

Jeannie Higgins Baltimore

Dear Jeannie,

Unfortunately, they do, and they did.

In Maryland, on the other hand, you guys are famous not only for your drive-ins, but for being the home of ... uh ... being the capital of ... or ... being the center of ... for being exactly like Texas.

Dear Joe Bob:

I fully agree with you about Tipper Gore and the scumbags that follow her. We come from the same state (Tennessee), a fact that I always try to live down. Of course, she isn't as big of a problem as the MPAA, who are making life miserable for all of us fans of drive-in movies and horror films. Maybe you could lash out at them in your column, or on your radio show, or maybe even on The Movie Channel. We must get the truth about these fiends out to the public, alert Mr. John Q. Public to the threat that they stand for. I do what I can do given my limited power, but you have the mass media working for you, Joe Bob. Your our number one link to the rest of the world. Plus you've got guts. I admire that. Now let's make sure that the drive-in will never die!

One of your biggest fans,
Kevin Hawkins East Ridge,
Tenn.

Dear Kevin,

East Ridge is not far from where they made *"The Curse,"* starring Claude Akins and Will Wheaton, about the mutant fungus that gets into the water and

Post Toastie. Four motor vehicle chases, with two motorcycle flips, one fireball, three demolished cars. Four gun battles. Four fistfights. Door-ripping. Wall-ripping. Hand rolls. King Fu. Bimbo Fu. Tear gas Fu. Drive-in Academy Award nominations for Hilary Shepard, as the girl who doesn't know whether to blow an alien's head off or fall in love with him, for saying, after the sex, "Talk about your close encounters"; Robert Forster, as a killer alien, for saying "Did he tell you that we're from some place far away?"; Lance Edwards, the alien cop, for answering every question with "Because I'm a peacemaker"; B.J. Davis, the stunt coordinator, for driving a car through a triple explosion in a dynamite shack, and for doing such a great job it takes a full minute to read the stunt credits at the end of the movie; and Kevin S. Tenney, the director also made *"Witchboard"* and *"Night Of The Demons,"* for his finest achievement so far.

Four stars. Joe Bob says check it out.

I was a little late getting over to

see *"Darkman,"* the ultimate movie about botched plastic surgery, because last week, right in the middle of a barbecue chicken dinner, Wanda Bodine bashed Cherry Dilday's face in. She hit her right square on the bridge of the nose with a beaded purse in the shape of a kitty-cat, and Cherry spouted blood all over my TV dinner tray.

We'd seen this coming for about a week, ever since me and Wanda Bodine were watching the Home Shopping Network one night, hoping the offer for 32 John Wayne videos for \$14.95 would come on. Wanda claims they were selling em one night, but we watched for four hours and all they had were eight cartoons for \$19.75. I bought all of em. I thought it was a ripoff when they were charging \$19.75 just for *"Superman,"*

specially since those *"Superman"* cartoons from the forties stink, but when they offered *"Popeye"* and *"Daffy Duck"* and *"Bugs Bunny,"* I went for it. Then, after I called in, they kept throwing new ones up there, so I'll also get *"Foghorn Leghorn,"* *"Porky Pig,"* *"Cespe the Ghost"* and *"Woody Woodpecker."* I'll have to smash the last two into smithereens when they come in the mail, cause there are some things too disgusting to have in the house.

How'd I get off on that?

Oh yeah — we were watching the Home Shopping Channel for four hours, and we'd already bought the following items:

-- A hand-crafted quilt that normally sells for \$967, but we got it for \$43. -- A "color computer," with software, "Nintendo ready," that would normally cost \$2,500. Our price \$125. -- A Regency Classic Family Bible with "leather-look hard cover with gilt edges" and a picture of Jesus on the front cover looking up to God, with light shining through his

hair. This normally costs eighty bucks, but we got one for \$9.75. The announcer said "I almost feel sacrilegious selling it at such a low price." -- A one-of-a-kind Potpourri Steamer, "votive candle included," "beautiful blue color," a \$37 value for only three bucks.

And all this time we were watching, they kept showing this seven-inch raised-link Marquis tennis bracelet made out of Beverly Hills Gold. And every time they would show it, Wanda would say, "What's Beverly Hills Gold?"

And finally I said, "I guess it's gold that's from Beverly Hills."

And she said, "I never thought of where gold came from."



Robert Forster in his most vulnerable moment in *"Peacemaker."*



And I said, "They don't dig it up in Beverly Hills. They dig it up some place like Mexico, and they truck it to Beverly Hills."

And so, every time they came on to lower the price—they started up around \$900 and came down to \$113.50—Wanda would say something like "I don't even know anybody that has any Beverly Hills Gold."

And so finally she bought the goldum thing. I saw it coming. I knew there wasn't anything I could do to head it off. And so she called em up, gave out her Mastercard number. Done deal.

The next day at work, Wanda was talking about her new Beverly Hills Gold when Cherry Dilday walked in. It so happens that, about a week before, Cherry had bought her own simulated gold tennis bracelet, but hers was made of "Black Hills Gold."

"What's Black Hills Gold?" Wanda asked her.

"It's gold that comes up from the Black Hills," Cherry said.

"I've never heard of it. It can't be that good."

And this made Cherry a little hot, so she said, "So where's gold supposed to come from?"

And Wanda said, "I just ordered some Beverly Hills gold."

And Cherry snickered. It wasn't a loud snicker. Just a grunt really.

And Wanda said, "What do you mean by that?"

And Cherry said, "You don't dig up gold out in Beverly Hills."

"I know that! You dig it up in Louisiana! Or Mexico! I can't remember."

"Then why do they call it Beverly Hills Gold?"

"Because it's brought to Beverly Hills from Mexico."

"There ain't no such thing as Beverly Hills Gold. Gold is made in the Black Hills."

"Well, I've never even heard of the Black Hills."

"That's because they're in Canada. Or Montana. Somewhere with a lot of forest rangers."

Neither one of em simmered down after that, and about a week later Wanda Bodine's Gold tennis bracelet came in the mail, and I have to say, it looked a lot bigger on TV. They must have had a midget wearing it or something. We had to open up the box and add all the extra links to get it on Wanda's arm, and then it still kinda hung catty-wampus across her wrist and made a red mark on it. That would have been okay, except an hour or two later, while we were eating dinner, Cherry Dilday showed up at the door and said, "The mailman told me you got that fake bracelet in the mail today."

Wanda Bodine was so mad she just glared at her.

Cherry looked at her arm. "I guess it's the one that's covering up that big red welt on your wrist," she said. "Do you want anything?" Wanda asked her.

"I just wanted to show you my Black Hills Gold Certificate of Authenticity, signed by the governor of North Dakota. Maybe you can show me your certificate from the Mayor of Beverly Hills."

turns everyone's face into a giant mas of Killer Ravioli Herpes Sores.

Surely if Tipper Gore saw this fine contribution of Tennessee culture to the horror-movie genre, she would be moved to reconsider her position.

Dear J.B.B.,

Just got back from Germany and got the chance to watch some cable TV over there. Now, I know you're not a big cable fan, but I saw a show you would love. It's called "Tutti Frutti" on RTC (Radio-Television Luxembourg) late Sunday nights. Basically, it's a game show all about the upcoming 1992 E.C. Monetary Union. To help explain this, there are about two dozen girls who either strip or take off their tops! The game itself is pretty stupid, but the real high point is the contestants have to strip as well. (There are two, a guy and a girl, each from a different E.C. country). This show is better than "Wall Street Week."

Al Pergande Orlando, Fla.

Dear At:

I could handle the Eyetalian girls, the Scandinavian girls (of course), and maybe even the German girls, except for the lesbo steroid moaster Olympic shot-putters. But I'm gonna have to draw the line at amateur Portuguese strippers. There are some things that should not be seen by small children.

Dear J.B.,

Some of your columns sound like Judy Tenuta in print! Do you write some of her stage or TV material? Or, perhaps, does she ghost-write your column? Hmmm?

Cheers,

Dave Phillips Bakersfield, Calif.

Dear Dave,

Judy Tenuta makes me feel like a lesbian trapped in man's body.

There was another slight snicker at this point.

What can I say? I should have seen the kitty-cat purse by the sofa. Wanda cracked Cherry's face open quicker than Chuck Norris can kung fu a Filipino extra.

It's not that bad, I don't think. They say Cherry will be out of the hospital sometime next week.

Wanda's wrist is beginning to heal, too.

I keep trying to look this up in my Regency Classic Family Bible "subject concordance," but they don't have a listing under "Bimbo."

And speaking of missing gray matter, "Darkman" is now, officially, number one on the 1990 Drive-In Hit List. The director, Sam Raimi, has made three movies, and all three have gone straight to number one. First "The Evil Dead," the zombie classic still banned in several countries. Next "The Evil Dead 2," in which the zombies become even more vicious. And now, the story of a scientist who's working on the ultimate plastic surgery discovery — making skin in a test tube — but gets half his face blown off by some gangsters led by Benny the reetard from "L.A. Law." The actor's real name is Larry Drake, and he likes to collect fingers in a box.

Unfortunately for Benny ... Larry, though, the scientist wakes up with so many bums on his body that the doctors are forced to cut off all his nerves, so he can't feel diddly squat. This means that he has superhuman strength and that you shouldn't tick him off, because he can't control his emotions. But what he can do is make all the synthetic-skin faces you can handle. They're better than the ones on "Mission: Impossible," but they work the same way. Just like Martin Landau, he can become anybody he wants to become — for 99 minutes, which is when the fake face starts turning into bubbling gooey pus and dripping on the pavement. That means everybody can see his real face, which looks like somebody fried some hash browns on it. Should he tell his girlfriend what happened? Should he blow Benny the reetards head off? Or should he just have dates with his girlfriend that last exactly 99 minutes? Approximately one thousand stunts, special effects, car chases, and helicopter sequences later, we find out the answer — and, in the meantime, Darkman becomes a more likable guy, in my opinion, than Charles Laughton in "The Hunchback Of Notre Dame." You laugh? You scoff? The man is ugly, the

man is evil, and the man is in love. This is gonna be an American Classic.

No breasts. Forty dead bodies. Three motor vehicle chases. The best helicopter stunt sequence ever filmed. Hand on fire. Fake nose making. Finger-chopping. Carry-bashing. Fingers roll. Ear rolls. Head splatters. Multiple explosions. Gratuitous waltzing. Kung Fu. Rivet-gun Fu. Manhole-cover Fu. Saran-Wrap Fu. Drive-In Academy Award nominations for Frances McDormand, as Darkman's girlfriend, for saying "if you're not going to kill me, I have things to do"; Liam Neeson, as Darkman, for saying "What is it about the dark. What secret does it hold?" and for getting mad at his cat all the time; Larry Drake, as the bad guy, for saying "Bring the Asian fingers"; and, of course, Sam Raimi, the Michigan State Whiz Kid grown up into the big time, for making the ultimate home-less movie.

Four stars. Best of 1990. Joe Bob says check it out.

To discuss the meaning of life with Joe Bob, or to get his weekly (!) newsletter for one year at the charter rate of \$19.95, write Joe Bob Briggs, P.O. Box 2002, Dallas, Texas 75221. Joe Bob's fax is always open at 214-368-2310.

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DARKMAN- HIDEOUS TRUTHS REVEALED!

By Rev. Ivan Stang, Church of the Sub-Genius

Driving home from DARKMAN last night, I realized that I had waited 25 years to see that movie.

The last movie that had me hating my fellow audience members so much was EASY RIDER, which I saw at 16. You can forgive me for that. I was only 16. Although I still think EASY RIDER is an excellent film about its time.

When I was walking out of the theater I overheard some handsome, young, rich Yuppief Pink Boys critiquing DARKMAN. DARING to critique it. A flock of Pinks who looked and talked just like the movie's DONALD TRUMP-like VILLAIN, daring to think they'd ever seen enough SUFFERING and ANGUISH in their pampered, spoiled, silly lives to possess even the vaguest grasp of what it was really about. Says one, "You know, that would make a great TV series, if they, of course, got rid of all that ridiculous gratuitous violence and got DEEPER INTO THE CHARACTER."

What would this YAMMERING, BLUTHERING MOMMA'S BOY know about depth of character?? I wanted to grab him by his lapels, say, "I am Darkman," and throw him through the plate-glass theater windows ... rip off my STANG mask to reveal the hideous beauty of my DEFORMITY - and disappear cackling into the night as the STUPID FOOLS and DUPES around me stood horrified that something so AWFUL and UNEXPLAINABLE had disrupted the pathetic sameness of their DREAMILY WELL-HEELED, PASSIONLESS, MEDIOCRE LIVES.

I guess what I'd been waiting for was a movie that took all the elements of the TRAGIC FREAK ANTIHERO and blended

them with TRULY VIVID filmic techniques. I liked the BATMAN movie okay, but mainly because of the art design. The camerawork, editing and general filmic style were otherwise disappointingly pedestrian. DICK TRACY had its moments but was a bit too much a CUTESY thing - the NORMALS idea of weirdness. Yesterday I'd also seen WILD AT HEART ... now that has superbly original filmic technique, but is NOT the kind of picture I'm talking about. DARKMAN is the first movie that REALLY DOES JUSTICE to the best of the

which the NORMAL OTHERS were so blinded by their SMUGNESS. Actually that's quite an exaggeration. I was no² a persecuted nerd. I was a defiant freak who won, certainly not the admiration of my nose-pickin' friends, but at least a measure of AWE and actual RESPECT. I was however AT EVERY WAKING (and sleeping) MOMENT, ACUTELY AWARE of my "DIFFERENCE." I wasn't sure what it was - now, of course, it's obvious; I was simply a SubGenius - but it was certainly there. Even girls who thought I was sorta CUTE were

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modern comic books. And it isn't even based on a comicbook. It has a similar tone and storytelling technique to both FRANK MILLER'S DARK KNIGHT series and ALAN MOORE'S WATCHMEN and V FOR VENDETTA. These comics were BETTER than ANY other "masked hero" movie UNTIL DARKMAN. In fact, they were better than MOST OTHER WORKS OF ART in the whole 1980s.

But that's all besides the point. DARKMAN is the kind of movie you'll either love or hate. And you can only love it if you grew up like me - SHUNNED, an OUTCAST ... a FREAK who skulked in the darkness knowing ALL THE WHILE that only HE could see the HIDEOUS TRUTHS to

afraid to get close to me. I can't say that I blame them. I didn't make it easy ... even though I wanted it SO VERY BADLY. Not their bodies ... well, yes, of course their bodies, but I would have been QUITE SATISFIED merely with a little LOVE. Oddly enough, my BUDDIES had NO INTEREST in LOVE and so managed to BESPOIL quite a few BODIES. I have since come to terms, and realized that those girls and boys got exactly what they deserved - a SHAM version of "relationships," culminating in embittering divorces and middle age sexual dysfunction. HAHHA. I, on the other hand, went on to become a HERO, at least in my own eyes, and a SEX GOD in the eyes of the only one who COUNTS, as well as the ever-grasping GROUPIES who my former classmates would KILL to even have the status to FLIRT WITH. I can LAUGH at them now. But as a boy, no, I wasn't LAUGHING THEN. I was a tightly-focused matrix of hate, a spring wound so tightly that it could uncoil only in my tormented BRAIN.

And so I found an odd ... succor ... and almost even COMPANIONSHIP ... in those

certain MONSTER MOVIES, as they're called.. such as THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA. THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME. THE BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN. THE INVISIBLE MAN. Even KING KONG. (Later on, when I got into drugs, it was more like DR. JECKYLL AND MR. HYDE, but that's off the subject.) The common element to all these movies was that the so-called "MONSTER" was not a monster at all, but was at heart far more gentle than the unthinking VILLAGERS and BURGER-MEISTERS around him. He had done NOTHING to deserve his status as a FREAK SHUNNED BY NORMAL SOCIETY and most ESPECIALLY BY THE WOMAN HE LOVED MOST. And yet, he was HOUNDED and DOGGED and TORMENTED by the BLIND FOOLS until — what choice HAD he, but to LASH OUT in INSANE RAGE and DIABOLICAL CLEVERNESS?? Until, of course, he was finally killed, because ... because there are some things man was not meant to know. And one of those things is LONELINESS. DESPERATE, BROILING LONELINESS. The scientist screwed up because he LEARNED TOO MUCH, but the monster suffers, because HE IS THE EPITOME OF



WHAT IS DIFFERENT. HE IS THE UNKNOWN.

One could say that THE ELEPHANT MAN was a far more realistic and compassionate approach to this theme. Yes, that's true up to a point. But the Elephant Man doesn't KICK ASS. He doesn't get REVENGE. The thrill of the classic monster picture lies in seeing THE PINKS GET THEIRS. In seeing Godzilla — who, after all, is only an innocent dumb animal — DESTROY THE WHOLE DAMN CITY and send the pinks SQUEALING IN TERROR before forces BEYOND THEIR KEN. It is THAT with which the true monster fan identifies, and it is THAT which the DARKMAN truly embodies to a more deliberate extent than any other film I know of.

SURE it has violence. It's INCREDIBLY violent. But it's not gratuitous. No, no, not at all. Indeed it's LONG OVERDUE violence, HIDEOUS, MINDLESS, AWESOME VIOLENCE against PINKS and CRIMINALS and other brainless EXPLOITERS of the TRUE SUBGENIUSES — we MONSTERS who walk among you. Yes, there ARE monsters walking among you. Like Darkman, who with his artificial flesh invention can APPEAR HUMAN, we SubGeniuses brush against you in stores,

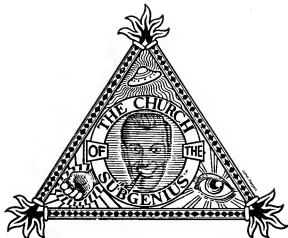
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FREAKS OUT. He crushes the hand of the jerk and tosses him like a RAG DOLL through the tent show facade. Then his face starts bubbling and his girl friend catches on that the ACCIDENT'S SIDE EFFECTS were perhaps a BIT WORSE than he'd been LETTING ON. He flees in shame and horror...

That scene SUMMED UP what all OUTSIDERS feel ... especially the LUCKIER outsiders, who still possess the POWER to PASS FOR NORMAL. I certainly felt it throughout my school years, and I see it in INSIDIOUSLY SUBTLER FORMS every day on TV and at WORK. It's a feeling that makes you want to ADOPT THE FREAK and NUKE those who laughed at him. I would braggingly say that I, in my small way, have acted as Darkman did. In school, I was VERY OFTEN the ONLY "ACCEPTABLE MEMBER OF SOCIETY" who would BEFRIEND the pathetic, sniveling, sad nerds and geeks and weirdos and grossly overweight kids...OUT OF PITY. Often they actually DISGUSTED me, but ... yet, they WERE, after all, rather more INTERESTING than the NORMALS with whom I also maintained friendship. Many of these FREAKS and WIMPS and NERDS did turn out to be DISGUSTING INSIDE AS WELL AS OUTSIDE, and I was glad to eventually lose touch with them. But many were truly GREAT SOULS trapped within a GROSSLY FLAWED SHELL, or pos-

sessed of neurological deficiencies. Yet they were MORE HUMAN than the HUMANS.

You can perhaps begin to see now why I have often described myself as a sort of LITTLE BIG MAN. I have had the MISFORTUNE to live equally in the worlds of both

Yes, ours is a tragic lot ... but it is also a source of PRIDE, a PRIDE and DIGNITY that YOU NORMALS CANNOT KNOW.

the OUTSIDER and the HERD. And you may also deduce why I might have become so involved with the Church of the SubGenius. THE CHURCH OF THE SUBGENIUS AND DARKMAN ARE THE VERY SAME THING. Except that Darkman is in the movies -- he can CRUSH, KILL and DESTROY, the church exists in REAL LIFE. We can but RIDICULE. And, after all, the Pinks, despicable though they are, do not deserve torture and death. It isn't their fault they're GREEDY, STUPID LITTLE PIGLETS. It's their COLLECTIVE fault of their whole UNIVERSE. Well, perhaps they DO deserve torture and death and death, but that just isn't PRACTICAL. It serves no purpose. Better they should be ENSLAVED and LED like CATTLE. But... you see? THEY ALREADY ARE! THEY ARE in

prison for what they have done. They don't have to be EXECUTED, because they are already BRAIN DEAD. Their capacity to enjoy FUN or BEAUTY or SLACK is so pitifully SHALLOW, so VAPOROUS, VAPID and PUNY compared to ours that our revenge is already sweet enough. By the same token, they know not what PAIN we must needs know. But REVENGE does us no good. CONTROL is what we seek -- POWER. And some of the time we have it. More so every day, as their world crumbles around them, crushed beneath its OWN WEIGHT. So what if we aren't paid as much as the DUNDERHEADS?? We sacrifice FAR LESS SLACK. So what if we have to "ACT" according to their rules, at least in public? THEY HAVE TO ACT THAT WAY ALL THE TIME. And so obviously the word of "Bob" points us not at mindless vengeance, but at CAUTIOUS and INSIDIOUS ACTIVISM. We must be the TERMITES GNAWING AWAY AT THEIR VERY FOUNDATIONS while they PAY US to be EXTERMINATORS. HAH! WE are the MONKEY WRENCH in the works. We certainly don't want to TAKE OVER the works, NAY! But we do want the right to LIVE WITHOUT THE WORKS AT ALL, which is a right NOT CURRENTLY GRANTED TO US. They can slave over their WORKS all they want ... as long as it doesn't disturb US. We would simply like to be able to set an example of what can be done ENTIRELY INDEPENDENTLY of

the works.. they might just be SURPRISED at what we FREAKS can DO. It might even CHANGE THEIR MINDS ... or free them up -- allow them to USE what little minds they HAVE.

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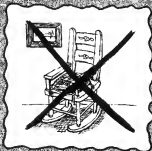
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